

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE

PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

Diplomová práce

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

*A Survey into Czech Teachers' Attitudes
Towards Inclusive Education*

Supervisor:

Doc. PhDr. Marie Čermáková, CSc.

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This dissertation is written independently by Luo Hui with all references listed in the bibliography and can be used by other researchers interested in this filed.

Abstract

Teachers are considered the key elements in promoting inclusive education and their attitude toward inclusion may influence school learning environment and the availability of equal educational opportunities for all students. The survey was carried out in Prague, Czech Republic to examine teachers' attitude toward inclusive education and the sample comprised of 104 regular and special school teachers.

The analysis of data confirmed findings of many previous studies on teacher attitude toward inclusion and revealed that Czech teachers generally hold positive attitude toward principles/concepts of inclusive education, but they have reservations or negative attitude toward inclusion of students with emotional/behavioral disorders and intellectual disabilities in regular classrooms. Moreover, Czech teachers are not satisfied with the training opportunities provided for their professional growth. They demonstrated lack of confidence in regular teachers' ability to meet the special education needs of students with disabilities. However, they felt optimistic about current level of collaboration among personnel and believe they have support from the authorities. They hold supportive attitude toward using differential instruction methods to meet the special education needs of students with disabilities. Implications for future study and practice are discussed.

Keyword: Czech teacher, attitude, inclusion

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Statement of the problem

Inclusion is now an overwhelming voice in the field of education. It is considered a human right that everyone including those with disabilities has equal opportunities to participate in the society. Education is one of the most important fields where the principle of inclusion should be implemented. In fact, inclusion has been widely recognized as an important objective to be achieved in education (UNESCO, 1994).

My experience of being a teacher in China since 1992 tells me that generally speaking, not much progress has been made in terms of implementing inclusive education. In more than ten years of my teaching experience, I have never had a student with physical disabilities. Moreover, I find limited attention has been paid to the special needs of students with learning difficulties. In my view, there are complicated factors contributing to the situation, but beliefs/values held by people must have played an important role. Chen (1996) suggested that in China, many people still believe that it is not possible to provide education for children with disabilities until “normal children” all receive an education. More importantly, it is essential that educators have positive attitudes toward the practice of including children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (OFSTED, 2005).

In September 2005, I took a master’s program in special education needs sponsored by European Commission, which allowed me opportunities to visit schools in Britain and the Netherlands and observe inclusive education in these countries. After visiting a number of schools, I found inclusion was being practiced with positive results in many mainstream schools, providing inclusive learning opportunities for children with special education needs. I also observed that at special schools, students with disabilities can receive special care and have the opportunity to learn useful skills,

though in a relatively segregated setting. However, during my visits to the schools, I noticed that there were a considerable number of teachers who had reservation or negative views toward inclusion. As one special school teacher said, "These (special school) children can't cope with mainstream education. That's not the way for them." It is quite surprising for me that many teachers hold negative attitude toward inclusion, while in literature, there are few arguments opposing the implementation of inclusion.

In literature inclusion is basically viewed as a moral issue related to human rights and equality. However, there seems to be a contradiction in that inclusion is regarded as an educational ideal while there are a number of teachers who do not support the ideal, even though they are supposed to be the ones to implement the ideal with commitment. Teachers are considered the key elements in promoting inclusive education and their attitude toward inclusion may influence school learning environments and the availability of equal educational opportunities for all students (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987). Teachers' attitudes to inclusion are closely linked with the acceptance of children with a disability (Ward *et al.* 1994; Scruggs and Mastropieri 1996). It should be safe to say what people believe and how they feel about a matter largely determines what they will do with it. If teachers do not have positive attitude toward inclusion, the prospects of implementing successful inclusion is highly questionable. Therefore, I think it is very meaningful to investigate teacher's attitude toward inclusion. By identifying teachers' attitude and its significance, recommendations can be made on how to improve educational policy-making and teacher training programs.

The final stage of my study is based in the Czech Republic, which has a long history of education for special needs and is shifting from segregation towards inclusion. I decided to carry out a survey among teachers in both special and mainstream schools to find out Czech teachers' attitude towards inclusion. My research questions are:

1. What is the overall attitude of Czech teachers towards inclusion?
2. What are Czech teachers' attitudes toward a range of practical issues in

implementing inclusive education? For example, what are teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with emotional and behavioral disorders? What do they think about the training opportunities provided for their' professional growth? How do they view disability? It is believed by the researcher if these questions are answered, a better understanding about Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion would be acquired.

1.2 Inclusive education in the Czech Republic

A great deal of research has been done on teacher attitude toward inclusion, but in English literature, not much has been said about teacher attitude in the Czech Republic. Though teachers may share similar perception on inclusive education regardless of their nationalities, it is also possible that Czech teachers have different attitude, because of different culture and education system.

In the Czech Republic, there is currently a multi track education system in which students with special education needs can either attend mainstream classes or special classes in mainstream schools or they can go to special schools (EUMAP, 2003).

The inclusive education policy in the Czech Republic started in 1989. According to Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion (2003), the numbers of integrated pupils are continually increasing in the Czech Republic. In 2002, there were 143, 982 pupils with disabilities, of whom 62, 009 were individually integrated while in 2001, the number of integrated children was 60, 975. There are legislations and regulations requiring the integration of children with disabilities. For example, the National Plan to Straighten the Opportunities for People with Disabilities specifies aims, tasks and principles for implementing inclusion in practices concerning health, social and educational policy. However, inclusion policy is still not a part of the Education Act (EUMAP, 2003).

Special education needs or disability is generally viewed in a functional instead of a

medical model in the Czech Republic. Assessment of special education needs is done at the educational psychological guidance centres and recommendation for the assessment is made by the class teacher, parent, the pupil him/herself or physician. Placement of the pupil in mainstream or special school is decided by the pupil's parents. Facilities and support for special education needs are mainly provided by special educational centres and psychological and pedagogical guidance centres (EUMAP, 2003).

Class teacher is considered the most important element in implementing inclusive education. The class teacher is responsible for managing the whole class and meeting the needs of each pupil. For this purpose, various kinds of support, which include in-service teacher training programs and a counseling system providing specialist support by psychologists or counseling special educators, are provided for teachers. Teachers can also get support from assistant teachers assigned by Special education centre or educational and psychological guidance centres. Teachers have opportunities to attend seminars organised for teachers of mainstream schools with integrated pupils. An individual education plan is prepared for each pupil with special needs by special educational centres or educational and psychological guidance centres in cooperation with the child's parents and teacher.

Special needs education is primarily financed by the state with a system allowing funds to follow the pupil with special needs to the school he/she attends. However, funding is not enough to cover the cost of one assistant teacher for each individually integrated pupil, which may cause difficulties for teachers to take full responsibility of an inclusive class. Other major difficulties concerning inclusive education in the Czech Republic include: 1) Many schools are not accessible for pupils with disabilities. 2) Teachers have traditional thinking patterns and are often reluctant to apply different approaches according to the needs of integrated pupils. 3) School climate is too demanding for pupils with special needs. 4) Many parents and teachers still believe segregated special education is a better option for children with

disabilities.

1.3 Teacher attitude and personal experiences

It is widely believed that teachers' attitudes/expectations impact students' educational outcome (Good & Brophy, 1997). If a student feels his/her teacher is supportive and caring, it will increase the likelihood that he/she will value education, see him/herself as capable, identify with values expected at schools such as setting high educational goals for him/herself and avoiding involvement in behaviors such as cheating (Murdock, Hale & Weber, 2001). According to Battistich, Solomon, Watson and Schaps (1997), students are likely to internalize the values and standards of their teachers when the relationship is characterized by mutual respect and admiration. My personal experience both as a student and a teacher has proved these points.

I have received my education in China where education from primary school to university lasts 15 years or so. After finishing university study I myself became a teacher and now I am a teacher with 12 years of teaching experience. When I reflect on the role of teacher attitude from my experiences of being a student and teacher, one conclusion I can draw is that attitude of a teacher can often make things different. In fact the reason why I chose to become an English teacher is because of an English teacher I had when I was a middle school student. His name is Yuan Xiaochun.

Before Mr. Yuan Xiaochun became my teacher, I had never enjoyed studying English. Learning English in China used to be equated with memorizing English words and grammar, plus reciting after a teacher or a tape recorder. This practice was common in English teaching and understandably, made English an extremely boring subject for many students. Mr. Yuan Xiaochun was a different teacher. He seemed to believe learning could be full of fun instead of being a burden. In my impression he was the first one in my school to use role play in teaching English. He wanted to show his students that everyone could learn English well and learning English could be interesting and entertaining. He didn't seem to care about traditional ideas that

teachers should be serious in class and maintain a formal and authoritative relationship with students. He treated students equally and respected every student. In Mr. Yuan Xiaochun's class students often laughed loudly for his humor. This style of teaching might not be rare in China today, but was indeed revolutionary twenty years ago. Because of Mr. Yuan, English became a favorite subject for many students. I started to be interested in learning English and worked on it. When I made progress, I could feel Mr. Yuan noticed and appreciated it, which gave me even more motivation. As a result, English became one of my best subjects and when I went to university, I chose English without hesitation as my major area of study. It was also because of Mr. Yuan that I became interested in education. When I graduated from university, I decided to be a teacher of English, as Mr. Yuan was.

When I became a teacher myself, I had a belief that the old way of English teaching which focused on passing examinations was not right. Therefore, I adopted teaching methods that were different from conventional ones. In my class, practice rather than memorization of knowledge was given higher priority and students had many opportunities to use the language in activities. The rationale, based on my experience of being a student myself, was that language should be learned through practicing repeatedly with content closely linked with students' real life. When I applied this method, I found the effects were surprisingly good. For example, if we read an article about environmental protection, I would divide the class into groups and asked them to talk in English about environmental conditions in their hometowns. I always tried to look for topics that were most 'meaningful' for students and it proved to be a successful strategy. It developed to such an extent that some of the classes I designed were not delivered in the classroom, but at places such as department stores, restaurants, parks, etc. From the feedback of students I could see that they liked this way of teaching and the learning results were satisfactory especially in terms of listening and speaking competences. I could also find theoretical support for my teaching method from educational and linguistic studies. For instance, Ausubel's (1968) cognitive learning theory contends that learning takes place through a

meaningful process of relating new events to already existing cognitive concepts. Therefore, meaningful, contextualized communication in the second language seems to be the best possible practice for the learner. I realized that my belief in new teaching approaches was essential to the subsequent innovation and improved teaching results.

However, I realized that my teaching methods did not work effectively for a small group of students who had extremely low efficiency in their learning of English and showed disengagement in almost all class activities. Brown (1987) proposed that students with weaker self-esteem build sets of defenses to protect their weak ego, which causes inhibition to communication. Sparks and Ganschow (1991) maintained that problems faced by unsuccessful language learners were close to those faced by the dyslexic. My attitude for these students was that if they could speak their mother tongue, they could learn to speak a foreign language. I tried to introduce more interesting activities, encourage them through compliment for any progress that had been made and adopted cooperative learning methods which I believe could help these students to develop self confidence. Though their progress was still not satisfactory, I could see they were learning and slowly improving their language skills. I think this group of students can be identified as those with special educational needs and should receive extra care. Teachers should spend more time with these students. Individualized learning plans should be designed to adopt the most suitable style of learning for each student. I believe if English teachers have this attitude toward the students with learning difficulties, learning can be improved significantly.

1.4 Summary

In this chapter I described the process whereby I developed my interest in doing research in teachers' attitude toward inclusion. I discussed the significance of doing such a study and stated my research questions.

I gave a brief introduction to inclusive education in the Czech Republic, with the

purpose of obtaining basic understandings of the research context. I also reflected on my own experience of being both a student and teacher, from which I drew a conclusion that teacher attitude was very important.

The organization of my research report is as follows:

Chapter One is the introduction part of the report. In Chapter Two I will review the literature of previous studies concerning teacher attitude toward inclusion. From the literature review I expect to find what has been done in this field and what knowledge has been developed about teachers' attitude. Chapter Three is about methodology. I will discuss the research strategy I plan to adopt and the reasons why I choose such strategy. I will also describe the procedure and participants of the study and how data will be collected and analyzed. Chapter Four presents and briefly analyses the data. In Chapter Five I will evaluate my findings in connection with those of other researchers. Finally, in Chapter Six, I will examine the whole research process and evaluate the research methods and results. Recommendations will be made based on the findings. Implications for future studies will also be discussed.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

2.1 Definitions of inclusion and controversies

Though the concept of inclusion is now widely accepted as a goal to be realized in education, there are different definitions and interpretations of the term. For instance, Farrell (2000) indicates that inclusion means students with special education needs should take a full and active part in the life of the mainstream school, should be valued member of the school community and be seen to be integral members of it. Mastropieri and Scruggs (2000) propose inclusion means that students with disabilities are served primarily in the general education classroom, under the responsibility of the general classroom teacher. Smith (1998) defines inclusion as “welcoming children with disabilities into the curriculum, environment, social interaction, and self-concept of the school” (p. 18).

It can be said that the term inclusion has different meanings when it is discussed from different perspectives. Farrell’s definition focuses on people’s attitude towards disability while that of Mastropieri and Scruggs emphasizes participation in general classroom by children with special needs. Smith’s definition, however, looks at the organization of the inclusive schools. A commonly agreed definition has not yet emerged. In my opinion, Mastropieri and Scruggs’ definition seems more from a practical perspective, emphasizing the role of regular classroom teacher and therefore, is more relevant to the current study. In the questionnaire I used in the study, a similar definition was adopted.

It may be worth referring to the Salamanca Statement (1994, p. viii) which calls for governments of all countries to take action to promote inclusion by proclaiming:

- *every child has a fundamental right to education , and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning*
- *every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs*
- *education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs*
- *those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.*
- *regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; more over, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.*

These statements summarized the main assumptions of inclusion, which have been agreed upon by nearly one hundred governments of the world. From these assumptions it can be seen the rationale for inclusion is based on concepts such as equality and human rights. Stockall and Gartin (2002: p.171-188) argue that “In nearly all the literature, inclusion is viewed ideologically, a belief system rather than a set of actions.” Low (1996, p. 9) also made an striking comment, “(in defining inclusion) We may have felt we occupied a piece of the moral high ground, but I cannot say that we felt we had attained anything but an ideological hegemony.” In fact inclusion is generally viewed as a moral issue and it might create considerable impact on people’s attitude. Croll and Moses (2000) suggest that the concept of inclusion has achieved widespread support at least at a rhetorical level. Understandably, people may choose to be on the side that is at least politically correct, if they need to show their attitude toward an issue of moral nature. Even so, this does not mean the concept of inclusion is not problematic. As Simmons (1998) suggests, there may well be examples where a child could receive appropriate education in a special school. Fuchs,

Fuchs and Fernstorm (1993) argued students with learning disabilities do not succeed academically in regular classrooms if there is no support from special education teachers. There are also cases where students with disabilities are placed in mainstream schools but actually segregated and bullied (Henry, 2005).

When it comes to the practical aspects of inclusion, there are more different beliefs about what are 'best practices' in implementing inclusive education. Kochhar and Taymans (2000) suggest that some experts believe the general education classroom can accommodate all students including those with severe and multiple disabilities while many special educators believe some students are unlikely to receive appropriate academic education without placement into special learning environments. Farrell (1997) argues that parents' views on inclusion are extremely varied. There are interest groups seeking further moves towards inclusion and others wanting to maintain a special school sector.

Although debates continue to focus on the extent to which children with disabilities should be educated in general education classrooms, there seems to be a general assumption that inclusion is a positive intervention for students with and without disabilities (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000). Studies in the 1990s indicate that students with special needs who are educated in general classrooms do better academically and socially than comparable students in special schools. (Baker, Wang, & Walerg, 1994/1995). On the whole, I think all these different views and beliefs reflect the complex nature of inclusion, which should also impact the attitude of teachers.

2.2 Studies on teacher attitude toward inclusion

There has been a great deal of research on teacher attitude toward the practice of serving students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Earlier this practice was generally referred to as integration which was often used interchangeably with inclusion. It was in recent years that inclusion has become a term more widely used. Though there are discussions about the differences between integration and inclusion

(Avramidis & Norwich, 2002), these two terms can basically be regarded as different stages of development for the same concept which is the practice of educating children with disabilities in mainstream settings. Therefore, studies on teacher attitude towards integration are also included in this review of literature.

2.2.1 Overall teacher attitude toward inclusion/integration

Studies show teachers hold positive attitude toward concepts of inclusion, though they have serious reservation about the practice of placing children with special education needs in mainstream schools. In the United States, for example, Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996) analyzed 28 American attitude studies conducted from 1958 to 1995 involving 10,560 regular school teachers and found that 65% of the teachers surveyed agreed with the general concept of integration, 54% were willing to include students with disability in their own regular class, and 55% felt that inclusion provided benefits to the student with disability, but only 40% believed it was a realistic goal for most children. It was also found that teacher attitude varied according to different disability conditions. This study provided an overview of teacher attitude toward inclusion in the United States and seems to be the most comprehensive research project about this topic.

Bowman (1986) investigated attitudes of about 1,000 teachers with experience of teaching children with special needs in 14 countries. These countries included Egypt, Jordan, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, Botswana, Senegal, Zambia, Australia, Thailand, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Norway and Portugal. Bowman found teachers surveyed were generally supportive to the concept of integrating children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. This was a very comprehensive study on teacher attitude in different countries including Czech Republic which was then part of Czechoslovakia. It is interesting to note that teacher attitude of 1980s was not significantly different from that of 1990s.

Leyser, Kapperman and Keller (1994) conducted a study of teacher attitudes towards

integration in the USA, Germany, Israel, Ghana, Taiwan and the Philippines. It was found that there were differences in attitude to integration between these countries. Teachers in the USA and Germany had the most positive attitudes while teacher attitudes were significantly less positive in Ghana, the Philippines, Israel and Taiwan. The authors argued that this could probably be due to differences in training opportunities provided for teachers and the different development in inclusive practices. In the USA and Germany teachers have more training opportunities and the percentage of children receiving specially designed education is much higher. This study identified inclusion training opportunities and special education teaching experience of teachers as important factors that can influence teacher attitude. Cultural factors were not indicated to have an impact on the formation of teacher attitude toward inclusion.

In Italy, Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1999) surveyed 523 Italian teachers using questionnaires based on the same core items taken from a previous survey conducted in the USA. The aim was to compare attitudes of teachers from the two countries given the fact that an inclusive policy had been implemented in Italy for 20 years. It was found the overall support for the concept of inclusion was very strong while Italian teachers were far less positive on practical items addressing their satisfaction with time, training, personnel assistance, and resources provided for inclusion efforts.

In UK, a study by Clough and Lindsay (1991) investigated the attitudes of 584 teachers towards integration and to different kinds of support teachers receive. They reported that teacher attitudes towards integration in the UK had become more favorable in the past ten years or so. They reasoned that it was partly because of the increased competencies teachers have developed from their experiences of teaching children with special education needs. Their findings also revealed that teachers' attitude varied according to different disability conditions. This was consistent with other researchers' findings that increased experience and knowledge in special needs

education have positive impact on teachers' attitude toward inclusion.

A number of researchers have reported generally positive attitude of teachers towards inclusion. However, there are also different teacher attitudes reported in studies. For example, Coates (1989) found that regular school teachers in Iowa, USA did not support 'full inclusion'. Most teachers believed that students with mild disabilities could not be effectively educated in the general classroom. Vaughn *et al.* (1996) examined mainstream and special teachers' perceptions of inclusion and concluded that most of the teachers investigated had strong, negative feelings about inclusion and felt that decision makers were out of touch with classroom realities.

Fulk and Hirth (1994) studied 517 regular education teachers and found that the majority of these teachers felt that inclusion was being "forced" on them, with only half (50%) of their respondents being supportive of inclusion and over one-third (37 percent) being solidly anti-inclusion. In similar studies, Monahan, Marino, and Miller (1996), Siegel and Moore (1994) noted that almost two-thirds of their samples of regular education teachers resisted inclusion. Forced inclusion might force teachers to reassess their professional roles and consequently, lead to high turnover rate of teachers (Baines, Baines with Masterson, 1994).

Jobe, Rust and Brissie (1996) investigated a randomly selected sample of 162 classroom teachers in the United States and found the sample was surprisingly neutral regarding inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. It was also found in the study that inclusion in-service training and special education teaching experience had the most significant relationship with teachers' attitude toward inclusion. Both had positive but modest impact on teacher attitude. Center and Ward's (1987) Australian study with regular teachers indicated that the teachers are not confident both in their own instructional skills teaching students with disabilities and in the quality of support personnel available to them.

It can be seen from literature that teachers generally hold positive attitude toward inclusion, though there are also less positive and negative attitudes reported. Teachers in different countries seem to hold varied attitude due to differences in training opportunities and education system. In literature researchers have identified a number of factors that can significantly influence teachers' attitude towards inclusion. These factors include teachers' experience and knowledge concerning teaching children with disabilities, teachers' gender and age, teachers beliefs and values regarding disability to teacher training, the types of disability to be dealt with in class, support provided for teachers and so on. Next I will focus on studies surrounding factors that influence teachers' attitude toward inclusion.

2.2.2 Contact experience and training

According to Smith, Price, and Marsh (1986), general education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion appear to be influenced by the level of knowledge and contact the individual teacher has with regard to a particular type of disability. Studies have also shown that teachers' attitude toward students with disabilities are closely related to teachers' ability to instruct these students (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). Contact experience and training seem to be an influential factor for teachers' attitude toward inclusion. Based on this hypothesis, some researchers focused their studies on a specific training program or contact experience and investigated teacher attitude in the beginning and the end of the training or experience to see if there were differences in teachers' attitude.

Sebastian and Mathot-Buckner (1998) conducted a case study of a senior high and a middle school in Washington where students with severe learning difficulties had been integrated. In this study, twenty educators were interviewed at the beginning and end of the school year to determine attitudes about inclusion. The researchers found that teachers' attitude became more positive at the end of the school year than in the beginning, after the teachers have gained experience and developed skills needed to implement inclusive programs. The findings of this study are consistent with Schumm

& Vaughn's conclusion that teachers' ability to deal with special needs of students can be an important factor to influence their attitude.

Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly (2003) conducted a study on attitude of a total of 274 preservice teacher education students who were taking a course on Human Development and Education. The students were surveyed at the beginning and end of a semester. The course included both formal instructions and field work such as interviewing community members regarding their knowledge of Downs syndrome and opinions on inclusive education. It was found at the end of the semester, the student teachers had more positive attitudes toward inclusive education and reported greater ease when interacting with people with disabilities. The study illustrated the positive influence of inclusion training in changing attitudes towards disability and inclusion.

Marry (1995) conducted a study on attitude change in Chicago, USA. In the study two hundred teachers who participated in an inservice training session on inclusion were given a questionnaire before and after the training. The majority of the teachers revealed more favorable attitude toward inclusion after they received the training. The author concluded that staff development is the key to the success of inclusion.

Avramidis *et al* (2000) investigated 81 primary and secondary teachers in southwest England and found teachers who had active experience of inclusion possess more positive attitude than those without such experience. Moreover, teachers with university-based professional development appear to hold more supportive attitude and have more confidence in meeting special education needs of students. Forlin (1995) found special education teachers were more accepting to children with physical and mental disabilities than teachers from mainstream schools. These findings show adequate training and experience in special needs education foster the formation of positive teacher attitude toward inclusion. However, this argument can not explain why some special educators who obviously have rich experience in

special needs education hold negative attitude toward inclusion.

It was argued by some researchers that contact experience does not necessarily lead to favorable attitude. Stephens and Braun (1980), for example, found no significant relations between teachers' contact with students with disabilities and teachers' attitudes towards integrating these students into regular classrooms. Center and Ward (1987) suggested that primary school teachers were more tolerant of integration if no special class or unit was attached to their school. Furthermore, there is evidence in literature that social contact could even produce unfavorable attitudes (Forlin, 1995). It can be understood that unsuccessful inclusive practices and the subsequent effects of failure will increase pressure on teachers and cause their resistance to inclusion.

2.2.3 Teachers' values and beliefs

Studies show that teachers' attitude towards disability may affect their attitude toward inclusion. Negative attitude toward disability leads to low expectations of a person with a disability which in return, could lead to reduced learning opportunities, beginning a cycle of impaired performance and further lowered expectations, both by the teacher and the child (Campbell et al. 2003). Obviously, for teachers with such attitude towards disability, inclusive education is not a choice of favour.

Carrington (1999) argued that a number of educators tend to subscribe to the traditional medical model of conceptualization that regards disability as a disease inherent in individuals. These understandings may be reflected in teachers' work and influence their attitude toward inclusion. Furthermore, teachers in a school community often collectively hold implicit beliefs about students, the subjects they teach and their teaching responsibilities, and these implicit beliefs influence teachers' attitude and reactions to their teaching practices.

Jordan, Lindsay and Stanovich (1997) found that teachers that view disability in the traditional medical model differed in their instruction from those who perceive

disability in the environmental model, in which the teacher attributes student problems to an interaction between student and environment. This finding is consistent with that of Carrington, all concluding that values and beliefs of teachers significantly influence teachers' attitude toward inclusion and consequently their practices in classrooms.

2.2.4 Other teacher-related factors

Pearman, Huang, Barnahart and Mellblom (1992) found in Colorado, USA that male teachers held significantly more negative attitude toward inclusion than female teachers did. Some other researchers have reported similar findings (Aksamit, Morris and Leunberger, 1987; Eichinger, Rizzo and Sirotnik, 1991). However, there are also study results that have provided contradictory evidence. For example, Marshall, Ralph & Palmer (2002) reported that attitudes were not significantly related to gender.

Teaching experience is another teacher-related factor identified as having an influence on teachers' attitudes. Teachers with fewer years of teaching experience have been found to be more supportive to integration (Center and Ward, 1987; Clough and Lindsay, 1991). Forlin (1995) suggested that acceptance of children with physical disabilities was highest among teachers with less than six years of teaching experience and for teachers with six to ten years of teaching, the acceptance level is lower. The most experienced educators (with more than 11 years of teaching experience) were the accepting. It seems that the more teaching experience a teacher has, the less positive attitude he/she will hold toward inclusion. However, some other researchers reported inconsistent evidences. For example, Leyser, Volkan and Ilan (1989) contended that teaching experience was not significantly related to teachers' attitudes. Similar results were reported by Romano and Chambliss (2000).

There were studies that showed special school teachers had more positive attitude toward inclusion than mainstream educators (Garvar-Pinhas & Pedhazur Schmelkin, 1989; Whinnery, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1991). However, inconsistent results were reported

by other researchers (Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991; Romano and Chambliss, 2000).

2.2.5 Type and level of disabilities

Type and level of disabilities is another frequently identified factor that can influence teacher attitude toward inclusion. Center and Ward (1987) indicated that teacher attitudes towards integration were strongly influenced by the type of disability and learning problems. Teachers were only willing to accept the inclusion of students with mild physical disabilities in regular classrooms. They were reluctant to include students with more severe physical disabilities, or students with intellectual disabilities. Some other researchers have reported similar findings (Rainforth, 2000; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

Consistent with Center and Ward's findings, Forlin (1995) reported that teachers were cautiously accepting of including a child with cognitive disability and were more accepting of children with physical disabilities. Only 6% of the educators considered full-time placement of children with severe physical disability as acceptable.

Bowman's (1986) UNESCO study was done earlier, but showed similar results. Bowman found teachers tend to support integration of children with different types of special education needs. Children with medical and physical difficulty were considered the easiest to manage in the classrooms and therefore, were the most favoured group for integration. Around a third of teachers felt that children with moderate learning difficulties and severe emotional and behavioral difficulties were suitable for integration. Very few teachers believed that integration of children with severe mental impairments and multiple handicaps could be taught in mainstream classes.

In the study of Ward et al (1994), teachers showed support for inclusion of children with mild physical and visual difficulties. However, most teachers expressed

uncertainty about inclusion of children with disabilities that demanded extra instructional competencies from teachers. All teachers showed their disagreement with inclusion of children with severe disabilities. These findings indicate a lack of confidence of teachers in meeting the special education needs of students with disabilities. Avaramidis et al (2000) had similar findings concerning teachers' low level of confidence.

In the Clough and Lindsay (1991) study, however, findings seemed to be slightly different. Teachers in the U.K ranked children with emotional and behavioral difficulties as most difficult to be included in regular classrooms. Children with learning difficulties were considered the second most difficult group, children with visual impairments the third and children with a hearing impairment were the fourth.

In summary, studies show teachers have different attitude toward inclusion of children with different type and level of disabilities. Generally speaking, most teachers believe children with mild physical disabilities can be included in mainstream classrooms while those with severe physical disabilities and intellectual disability are considered not suitable for inclusion. Teachers show very limited support for inclusion of children with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

2.2.6 Support provided for teachers

A number of researchers have identified support provided for teachers as another important factor that correlate with teachers' attitude toward inclusion. Support provided for teachers of mainstream classrooms is considered a necessary condition for successful inclusion of students with disabilities. Such support include not only those from school management and local community, but also more technical support such as having more resources, smaller class size, more time available for preparation and specialist assistance from psychologists, therapists, etc.

Rachel, Shunit and Neomi (2005) investigated a total of 330 primary school teachers

and found that social support was a significantly negative factor that correlates with teachers' attitude. In other words, the less social support the teacher experienced, the higher was her level of negative attitude towards inclusion. The study also revealed that the number of students with special needs in class (more than 20%) and very little assistance provided to the teacher cause similar negative effects on teacher attitude towards inclusion.

Class size is identified by a number of researchers to be a factor that influences teachers' attitude. Class sizes larger than 30 when working with students with or without disabilities contributes to teacher impatience, intensify discipline problems, and is a barrier to individualizing instruction (Siedentop & Tannehill, 2000). Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996) reported that teachers felt class size should be lowered to less than twenty when children with disabilities were included.

Janney *et al.* (1995) compared teacher attitudes before and after teachers received adequate support from relevant authorities and found that such support was instrumental in the formation of positive attitude toward integration of students with disabilities. The authors suggested that continuous support from head teachers contributed significantly to the success of the integration program of the schools they studied.

2.3 Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed literature concerning teacher attitude toward inclusion.

In the first part I briefly discussed different definitions of inclusion and its moral nature. It is noted there is no commonly agreed definition and people have different opinions toward inclusion, especially in practical areas.

In the second part I focused on literature of studies on teacher attitude toward inclusion. In literature, it was found teachers generally hold positive attitude to

concepts, principles of inclusion, but they have serious reservations and concerns over some issues in applied fields. Researchers have found factors such as training and contact experience, teachers' values, students' disability conditions, support provided for teachers can significantly influence teachers' attitude toward inclusion. There are contradictory findings concerning the influence of factors such as teachers' gender, age, current position, etc. It was also found teachers from different countries have different attitudes toward inclusion.

3.2 Objective of the study

The aim of this study is to find out Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion. It studies the distribution of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Previous studies of teachers' attitude toward inclusion show teachers are generally supportive to the concepts of inclusion, though they have serious doubts about all sorts aspects in implementing inclusion (see Chapter IV). There are two studies regarding that teachers have general or negative attitude toward inclusion. However, a search in relevant English literature shows that are very limited reports on teachers' attitude toward inclusion in the Czech Republic. This situation is also a kind of evidence to be included in the Czech Republic. Teachers' attitude toward inclusion is the result of various factors, such as teachers' personal characteristics, social environment, etc. It is possible that Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion is different because of differences in social environment. Therefore, it is possible that Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion is different from that of inclusive

Chapter III

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the first two chapters I introduced how I have chosen my research topic and reviewed the literature concerning this topic.

In this chapter I will first give a brief introduction to the objectives of the study. To address the problem, I will discuss some of the major paradigms and corresponding methods in educational research and their significance to my current study. I will also describe participants of my research and the procedures how I proceeded with the study. After that I will focus on the methods I choose to apply in my study and discuss their advantages and disadvantages in application and why I believe these methods are suitable for my project. Finally, I will examine ethical issues concerning my research.

3.2 Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to find out Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream settings. Previous studies of teacher attitude toward inclusion show teachers are generally supportive to the concepts of inclusion, though they have serious reservations on some aspects in implementing inclusion (see Chapter Two). There are also studies indicating that teachers have neutral or negative attitude toward inclusion. However, a search in relevant English literature shows there are very limited reports on teacher attitude toward inclusion in the Czech Republic, where inclusion is also a goal of education to be realized (EUMAP, 2003). Czech teachers' attitude may be similar to that of teachers from other countries, but it is possible that Czech teachers have different attitude toward inclusion because of differences in culture and education system. After all, it is still logical to assume that Czech teachers' attitude to a large extent determines the success of inclusive

education in the Czech context.

There are several major objectives in this research. First of all, I hope to find out the general attitude of teachers from both mainstream and special schools in the Czech Republic. Do teachers support or oppose inclusive practices in their classrooms? Or do they hold neutral attitude? Secondly, I want to identify teachers views on a range of questions related to inclusive education. According to relevant literature of previous studies, factors such as different types of disabilities, teachers' contact experiences, training provided for teachers will significantly influence teacher attitude toward inclusion. Teachers' concerns regarding practical issues such as class size and assistance provided to teachers are also to be investigated. Based on the findings, recommendations can be made on educational policy making and teacher training. It is also expected that advices will be given on how to provide better support for teachers so as to promote inclusive education.

3.3 Research environment

The research started in April, 2006 in Prague, Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic Czech is the official language and most people including school teachers generally do not speak English. From the beginning of the study, there has always been the difficulty of communication between the researcher and participants due to the language barrier.

For the same reason, I found at the many libraries in Prague, there was very limited literature I could make use of for my research. Even those available were mostly outdated. Fortunately internet-based resources in English provided a large number of journal articles discussing most recent research development in the area, which were of great value for my work.

I had opportunities to visit both special and mainstream schools in Prague, which were often friendly and showed willingness to cooperate with research projects.

However, the language barrier made it difficult, if not impossible, to observe classes and have discussions with teachers and students. Similarly, interview is a method of much difficulty to use due to the language barrier. Interpretation not only takes extra time and efforts, but also may lead to teachers' refusal to be interviewed in the first place.

3.4 Research paradigms and methods

In my view, the choice of methods for a research project is often predetermined by the research topic itself and the research environment. Obviously, research questions come before research methods and it is logical to assume that methods should meet the needs of finding answers to research questions. As Manstead and Semin (1988) suggested, strategies and tactics selected in carrying out a piece of research depend on the type of research questions to be answered.

For a research project, the choice of methods needs to follow a research paradigm, either consciously or unconsciously. Paradigm, according to Filstead (1979, p. 34), is a "set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organized study of that world". There have been quite a few paradigms, among which positivism and constructivism seem to have been two of the most dominant ones in the history of research. Even today, there are still many researchers who follow these two paradigms in their studies.

An obvious feature of positivism is its emphasis of a 'scientific attitude', which according to Robson (2002), means that the research should be done '*systematically, skeptically and ethically*'. Though these words sound not of much practical significance to my research, I believe these beliefs are essential for a successful study. The scientific attitude is an invaluable legacy inherited from positivism given the fact that all research need to be objective and produce knowledge that is true and valid. Though I don't agree with positivists' claim that research should and can be value-free, I still would like to add some elements of positivism into my research. Positivism is

generally considered more valuable for natural science, but I believe a scientific attitude is also necessary for social science research including educational research where the same validity and accuracy are required.

An important characteristic of studies that follow positivism is the use of quantitative research methods. Quantitative methods, as indicated from the name, involve explicit use of figures, statistics and calculations. The application of mathematics gives a sense of accuracy and explanatory power to the research, at least superficially. This is of course the strength of positivism and quantitative research methods, which can be used as effective tools in many researches. In my research design, I intend to use questionnaire-based survey to examine teachers' attitude, which obviously involves a great deal of calculation of figures and is therefore considered a quantitative method. Moreover, data collected will be interpreted in figures, from which conclusions and finding will derive.

However, positivism is considered an outdated research paradigm that is not popular especially among social researchers. For example, commentators point out that positivistic methods can not "capture the subtleties and complexities of individual human behaviour" (Robson, 2002: p. 98). Byrne (1998, p. 37) even commented, "Positivism is dead. By now it has gone off and is beginning to smell". Human society and human beings are indeed too much complex to be described only in figures. For example, measuring the attitude of an individual by assigning a numerical value to it can hardly be considered satisfactorily scientific and accurate because human attitude and feelings may involve many complicated factors and a numerical value just can't cover the whole picture. It seems that quantitative methods alone are not enough to meet the needs of social science studies, such as the current study to investigate teacher attitude toward inclusion. Avramidis (1998) contended that accurate judgements of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion can not be made solely by employing traditional quantitative methods. For the present study, I decided to adopt a mixed approach combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Bryman (1988) points out that there is great compatibility between quantitative and qualitative methods, especially for those working in applied fields.

Constructivists hold that reality is constructed in the mind of the individual, as opposed to the positivist view that there is only one external, objective reality. In other words, the reality is socially constructed. According to constructivism, the goal of research is to develop a body of knowledge of the individuals being studied and this knowledge can be used to form hypotheses about other individuals under similar contexts (Borg and Gall, 1989). The major task of researchers is to acquire deep understandings of the live experiences of individuals being studied. Qualitative researchers are described as those who “attempt to objectively study the subjective states of their subjects” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998: p.33). This description reveals the interesting combination of subjectivity and objectivity embedded in qualitative research, which is also intended to be achieved in this study. In my opinion, constructivism perfectly correspond with the characteristics of educational research, which often aim at understanding the feelings, attitudes and experiences of people who are involved in educational activities. Accordingly, a qualitative research design seems to be appropriate for the present study of teacher attitude toward inclusion. Since my objective is to investigate and describe teachers’ perception of inclusion, a questionnaire-based survey was used in the study and descriptive data were collected. Though interview was also considered as a valuable method to collect data in the study, it was not used because of the language barrier as discussed earlier. For the same reason, none of the statements in the questionnaire was open ended.

According to Robson (2002, p. 234), survey as a research method has the following advantages:

1. *They provide a relatively simple and straightforward approach to the study of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives.*
2. *They may be adapted to collect generalizable information from almost any*

human population.

3. High amounts of data standardization.

For the present study on teacher attitude toward inclusion, simplicity and straightforwardness are characteristics of great value, since there were no time and resources to conduct a relatively complicated research using multi-methods for data collection. Moreover, though the study aimed to find out facts about Czech teachers' perception of inclusion, data was collected only at schools in Prague. Therefore, generalizable information was very much needed. Needless to say, data standardization could make analysis easier and is definitely an advantage for the research.

However, De Vaus (1986) suggests that the major disadvantages of surveys are that they examine particular aspects of people's beliefs and actions without looking at the context in which they occur, therefore might generate data of dubious value. Robson (2002) also points out that data collected through questionnaire-based survey are affected by the characteristics of the respondents such as memory, knowledge, experience, motivation and personality. Another disadvantage is that questionnaires typically have a low response rate. These problems may cause difficulties to ensure validity and reliability for studies using survey as the research method.

3.5 Instrumentation

According to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1977), attitude is the "mental position, emotion, or feeling held toward a fact or state" (p.73). Attitude is something concerning people's feeling or view which is too complicated to be assessed by means of a single question or statement. However, responses to a range of carefully selected questions may help to identify respondents' attitude toward a fact or state. The questionnaire used in the study includes twenty statements and respondents are asked to give their ratings to these statements.

Though questionnaire has been widely used and proved to be effective in identifying respondents' attitude, problems may probably arise from constructing the questionnaire and interpreting the responses. Robson (2002) suggests that it is not advisable to develop one's own test unless considerable time and resources are available for this purpose. Major concern lies in the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Social scientists have long recognized that factors other than an individual's attitude toward a fact may influence his/her response to instruments designed to measure the attitude. For instance, a respondent may choose to give a socially acceptable answer instead of his/her real views. Given the fact that inclusion is a moral issue related to human rights and equality, this concern is worth taking serious consideration.

Another option is to change an existing questionnaire to better meet one's needs, which I found more suitable for the present study. Therefore, part of the teacher attitude questionnaire developed by Galis and Tanner (1995) was used in my test. I added some statements based on literature concerning previous studies of teacher attitude toward inclusion. For this reason, existing validity and reliability may have been changed as well. In recognition of this point, efforts were made to reestablish validity and reliability through reviewing by an expert in special education and a psychologist. Recommendations from them were incorporated into the survey instrument in terms of selecting and wording of the statement. It is worth pointing out that the original draft was in English, which was translated into Czech for consideration that most of the target population do not speak and read English. After that the Czech version of the questionnaire was retranslated into English to check consistency with the original draft. This process was considered as part of triangulation work which was important to ensure validity and reliability of the research.

The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section is designed to collect demographic information of the target population such as age, gender, teaching

experience, etc. The second part is made up of twenty statements which are categorized into five areas: 1) values/beliefs teachers hold, 2) teaching strategies in an inclusive classroom, 3) collaboration in the school, 4) teacher attitude toward inclusion of students with different types of disabilities, 5) support provided for teachers. For each statement, teachers were asked to respond on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. For analysis of teacher perception on each statement, data showing percentage and frequency were used. Together with the questionnaire distributed to respondents was a cover letter which described the purpose and nature of the study and gave a brief introduction to the researcher.

3.6 Participants and data collection

Target participants of the study were teachers from both special and mainstream schools in Prague, the Czech Republic. Due to the fact that data collection of the study was done in June, which was the busiest time for Czech teachers in a school year, low response rate for the questionnaire was anticipated.

The questionnaire and cover letter was first sent by email to directors of randomly selected schools in Prague to ask for permission to carry out the study at the schools. About one out of five schools showed interest in cooperation. A visit was then paid to the school, where the researcher had a discussion with the director or head teacher about the school. Often there were visits to classrooms for a short period of observation. Then questionnaires were given to the director or head teacher who would distribute to teachers at the school latter. After an agreed period of time, the researcher visited the school again and collected the completed questionnaires. In a typical process described above, data concerning teacher attitude toward inclusion were collected at four schools in Prague, among which two were mainstream schools and two were special schools for students with mild and severe intellectual disability.

To increase the sample size of the research, target samples were expanded to randomly selected teachers in Prague who had interest in participating in the research.

This was done through contacts of a veteran educator who was highly respected in many schools in Prague. In the end, 200 questionnaires were distributed and 124 teachers completed the questionnaire. The overall return rate was 62%. It was noted that among the 124 completed questionnaires, not every teacher responded to all items. Altogether 104 questionnaires were successfully completed. About missing data, Youngman (1979, p. 21) commented, 'The most acceptable solution to the problem of missing information is not to have any.' Though missing data might have certain significance related to views of the respondents as suggested by Robson (2002), questionnaires with missing data were regarded as invalid and not used in the present study.

3.7 Ethical considerations

In my view, research is an activity that involves interaction between the researcher and the researched. During this process, ethical issues may derive from various aspects of a study. As Robson (2002) pointed out, ethical problems start at the very beginning of a study. It might be questions like 'Should I get consent from the research subjects before the research gets started?' or 'Do subjects have the right not to cooperate?'. Though these questions often do not become real ethical problems in actual research, it is still important to give consideration to the ethical issue before starting the research.

According to Reynolds (1979), ethics refers to rules of conduct and conformity to a code or set of principles. In social research, I think it is important that researchers follow a code of conduct that ensures interests or benefits of the subjects will not be harmed. For the present study to investigate teacher attitude toward inclusion, several key points regarding research ethics are considered.

First of all, the so called informed consent must be obtained from school directors and teachers before doing any research about them. I think that schools and teachers are not there for the purpose of anybody to do research and they have the right to choose

not to cooperate with research projects. If schools and teachers agree to participate in the research, they should be fully informed of the purpose and nature of the study and their consent of recipient of the questionnaire should be sought before its distribution.

Secondly, confidentiality and anonymity of respondents to the questionnaire should be strictly preserved. This is a usual practice in carrying out such questionnaire-based surveys, which aims not only to protect privacy and confidentiality of the respondents, but also helps to ensure responses are objective and accurate.

Thirdly, it is important to honor any undertakings to participants by the researcher. This is also a matter of courtesy in the interaction between the researcher and the researched. For example, there were cases where the researcher did not collect questionnaires because the data were not to be used, though arrangement had been made before. Such things will only spoil the good will and willingness of subjects to cooperate in future research projects. In the present study, several school principals and head teachers showed interest in obtaining the final results. The researcher promised to send results and findings of the study to them, as a gesture to express gratitude as well. Hopefully findings of the study will be sent to them in August when the study is finished.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

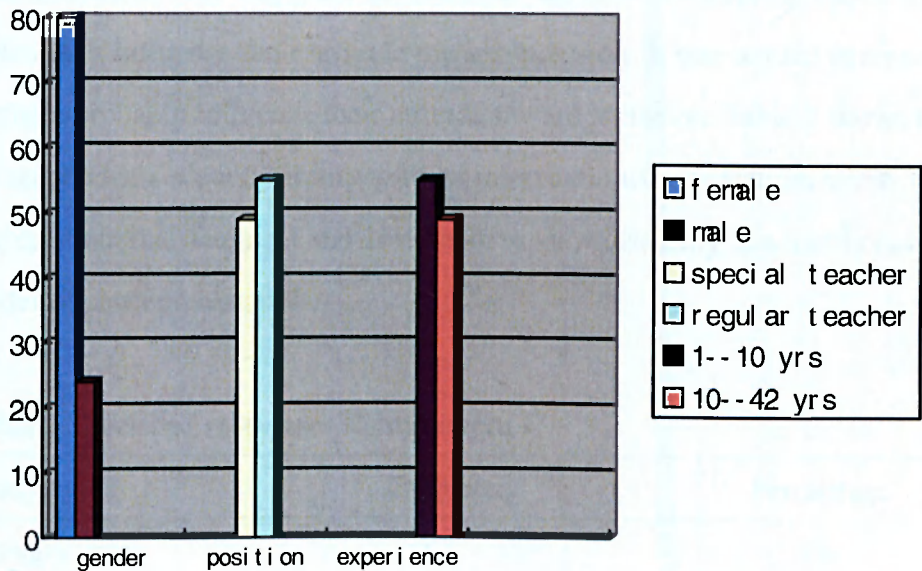
4.1 Demographic Data

As indicated earlier, the questionnaire used in the survey is made up of two sections. The first section is designed to collect demographic information of respondents which include gender, overall teaching experience, special education teaching experience and current position. From the 104 valid questionnaires returned, it can be seen 77% of the respondents are female (n=80) and 23% male (n=24). 96% of the respondents reported they had special education teaching experience (n=100). 53% said they were mainstream schools teachers (n=55) and 47% taught at special schools (n=49). 53% reported they had teaching experience of 1 to 10 years (n=55) and 47% had been teachers for time periods ranging from 11 to 42 years (n=49).

Table 1 Demographic Data

Categories	Descriptors	Percentage	Number
Gender	Female	77%	80
	Male	23%	24
Current position	Special school teacher	47%	49
	Mainstream school teacher	53%	55
Teaching experience	1-10 years	53%	55
	10-42 years	47%	49

Graph 1 Demographic Data



4.2 Data of teachers’ attitude toward inclusion

Twenty statements were used to identify teachers’ attitude toward inclusion. It was reported in previous studies that teachers’ attitude might be influenced by a range of factors. These twenty statements were selected to examine teachers attitude toward factors which include teachers’ personal values, inclusion of students with different disabling conditions, support provided to teachers, etc. It is expected that through examination of these factors, Czech teachers’ attitude toward inclusion can be better understood. In this chapter, teachers’ responses to all twenty statements will be analyzed respectively.

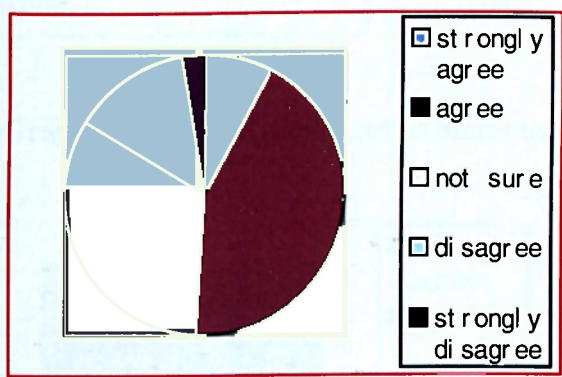
Statement 1: Disability is a social issue instead of a personal problem.

This statement was designed to examine teachers’ conceptualization of disability which may influence their attitude toward inclusion. It was argued personal values of teachers probably influence their attitude toward inclusion. Table 2 shows that 51% of the respondents view disability with an interventionist orientation, while 33% can not decide about the statement and 16% seem to view disability in a traditional biomedical model of conceptualization.

Table 2 Teachers’ responses to Statement 1

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	8	8%
Agree	45	43%
Not sure	34	33%
Disagree	14	13%
strongly disagree	3	3%
Total	104	100%

Graph 2 Teachers’ responses to Statement 1



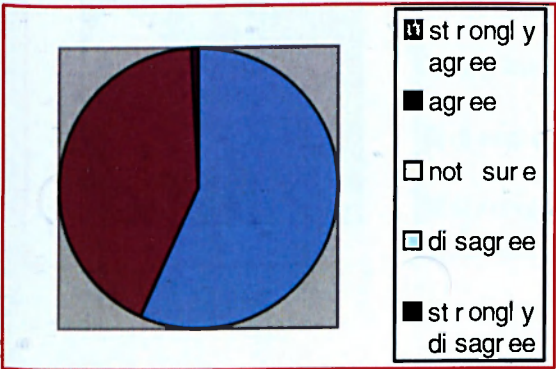
Statement 2: It is important to make modifications for students with special needs at regular schools.

This statement was designed to find out teachers' beliefs on adaptation of curriculum, environment, instruction strategies etc. so as to meet the needs of students with disabilities in mainstream settings. It was found 99% of the respondents believe making modifications for students with special needs was important. Only one teacher (1%) reported this was not important. The highly consistent responses imply that most of the teachers under investigation believe it is necessary to make modifications in mainstream schools so as to accommodate special needs students. Table 3 illustrates the findings.

Table 3 Teachers' responses to Statement 2

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	59	57%
Agree	44	42%
Not sure	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
strongly disagree	1	1%
Total	104	100%

Graph 3 Teachers' responses to Statement 2



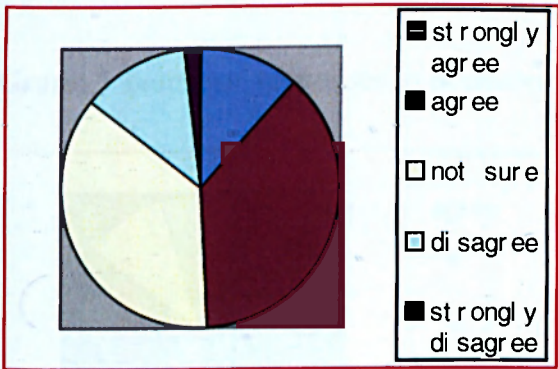
Statement 3: Teachers’ opinions are taken into consideration in making decisions of inclusion.

This statement was used to examine teachers’ views on the decision making of inclusion. It is reasonable to assume that teachers will be more supportive toward inclusion when their opinions, concerns and needs are seriously taken into consideration by decision makers. Table 3 shows 49% of the respondents (n=51) agreed or strongly agreed teachers’ opinion played a role in decision making process of inclusion while 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Meanwhile, 37% implied they were not sure if this was true.

Table 4 Teachers’ responses to Statement 3

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	12	11%
Agree	39	38%
Not sure	38	37%
Disagree	13	13%
Strongly disagree	2	1%
Total	104	100%

Graph 4 Teachers’ responses to Statement 3



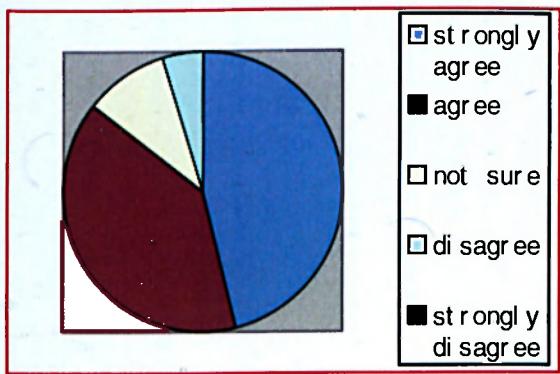
Statement 4: Inclusion of students with mild physical disabilities into regular classes is generally effective.

This statement aimed to examine teachers’ beliefs on inclusion of students with mild physical disabilities. Previous studies indicated that teachers’ attitude toward inclusion changed significantly when students with different types of disabilities were included. Students with mild physical disabilities were reported to be the group teachers were most willing to include in their classrooms. Survey results of this study show the majority of respondents (85%) were supportive toward inclusion of students with mild physical disabilities. Only a small percentage of teachers (5%) were not supportive while 10% were not sure about the statement. Table 5 below illustrates the findings.

Table 5 Teachers’ responses to Statement 4

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	48	46%
Agree	41	39%
Not sure	10	10%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	104	100%

Graph 5 Teachers’ responses to Statement 4



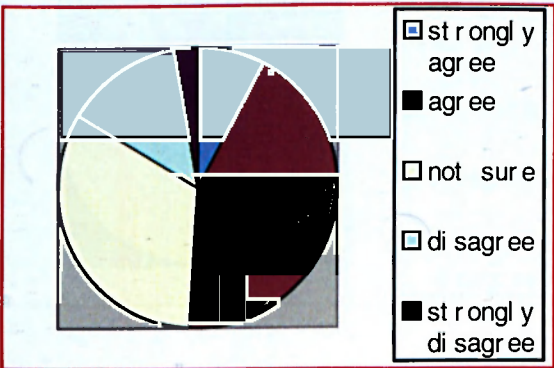
Statement 5: Students with emotional/behavioral disorders can be included in regular classrooms.

This statement was designed to examine teachers’ attitude toward inclusion of students with emotional/behavioral disorders in mainstream classrooms. Analysis of data reveals that 43% of the respondents believe inclusion of students with emotional/behavioral problems is feasible, though 21% hold opposite views. The percentage of respondents who does not have an explicit opinion was high, at 36% while the percentage of respondents who either strongly agree or strongly disagree is only 2%. The results show that the teachers have serious reservations about the inclusion of students with emotional /behavioral problems.

Table 6 Teachers’ responses to Statement 5

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	2%
Agree	43	41%
Not sure	37	36%
Disagree	20	19%
Strongly disagree	2	2%
Total	104	100%

Graph 6 Teachers’ responses to Statement 5



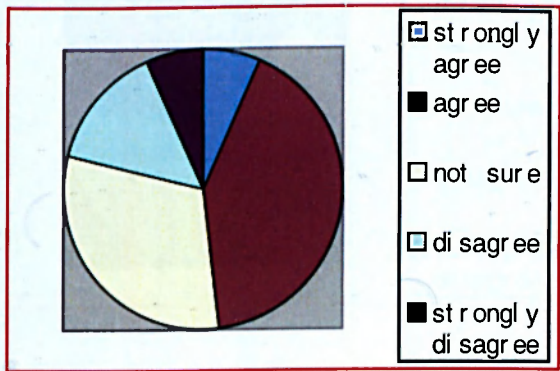
Statement 6: Students with intellectual disability can be included in regular classrooms.

This statement was used to identify teachers’ attitude toward inclusion of students with intellectual disability in regular classrooms. Results of the survey (Table 7) show similar distribution of responses as those for statement 5. It is found 48% of the teachers surveyed report supportive attitude toward inclusion of students with this type of disability, while 21% hold negative attitude. Again it shows the percentage of respondents who can not make a decision was high at 31%, indicating teachers are cautious toward this issue.

Table 7 Teachers’ responses to Statement 6

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	7	7%
Agree	43	41%
Not sure	32	31%
Disagree	15	14%
Strongly disagree	7	7%
Total	104	100%

Graph 7 Teachers’ responses to Statement 6



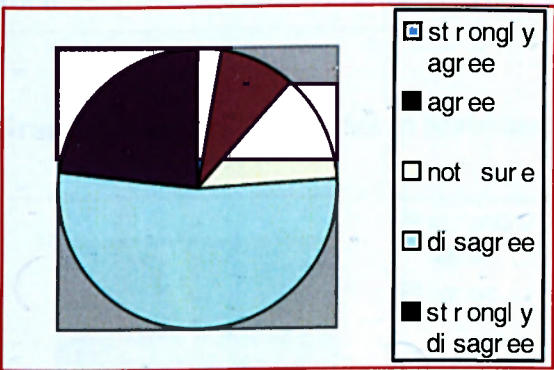
Statement 7: Keeping academic standards consistent for all students is important.

This statement was used to find out teachers’ attitude toward the practice of keeping consistent academic expectation for both regular students and those with special needs. Results in Table 8 show teachers inquired hold a practical attitude toward the practice of maintaining the same academic standards for all students. 76% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree to the statement. Only 12% of the teachers show positive attitude. Teachers under investigation seem to believe it is not possible to keep consistent academic expectation for all students.

Table 8 Teachers’ responses to Statement 7

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	3	3%
Agree	9	9%
Not sure	13	12%
Disagree	55	53%
Strongly disagree	24	23%
Total	104	100%

Graph 8 Teachers’ responses to Statement 7



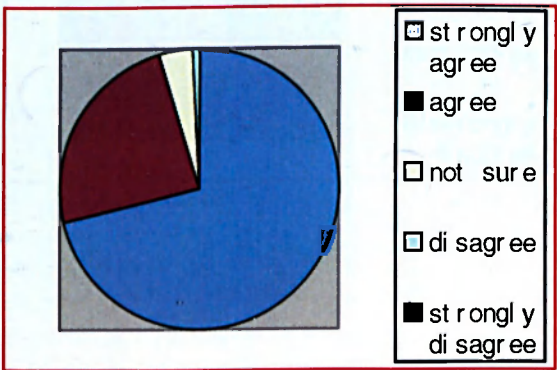
Statement 8 Maximum class size should be lowered when including students with disabilities.

The purpose of this statement was to examine teachers’ attitude toward class size when including students with disabilities in their classrooms. The hypothesis was that teachers would prefer to have smaller class size so that they had enough time to meet the special needs of students with disabilities. Table 9 shows that 71% of the respondents strongly agree, 24% agree that maximum class size should be lowered while few respondents disagree or strongly disagree to the statement. There is an overwhelming majority of respondents agreeing to the statement, which indicates that class size is a common concern for teachers when including students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Table 9 Teachers’ responses to Statement 8

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	74	71%
Agree	25	24%
Not sure	4	4%
Disagree	1	1%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	104	100%

Graph 9 Teachers’ responses to Statement 8



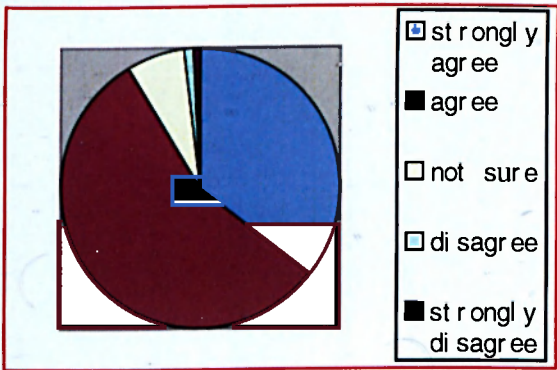
Statement 9: The inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms can be beneficial to other students in the class.

This statement was used to examine teachers’ belief on the benefits of inclusion to non-disabled students in the class. Response to this statement to a large extent reflects respondent’s overall attitude toward inclusion. Table 10 below shows 91% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms is beneficial to non-disabled students. Only 2% of the respondents said they disagree or strongly disagree to the statement. The results indicate that most teachers tend to hold supportive attitude toward inclusion.

Table 10 Teachers’ responses to Statement 9

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	37	36%
Agree	58	55%
Not sure	7	7%
Disagree	1	1%
Strongly disagree	1	1%
Total	104	100%

Graph 10 Teachers’ responses to Statement 9



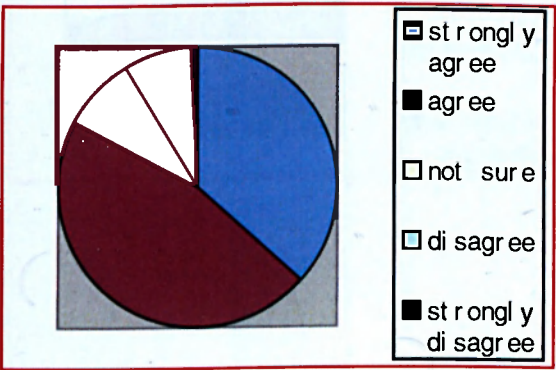
Statement 10: I have support from the authorities to try new ideas and implement creative strategies.

This statement aimed to identify teachers’ opinion on support they can get from authorities to try new ideas and implement creative strategies, which was considered important for promoting inclusive education. Table 11 shows 82% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they have such support from the authorities while only less than 10% disagree. Such results indicate that school authorities in the Czech Republic tend to encourage innovative practices and teachers are satisfied to have such support in implementing inclusive education.

Table 11 Teachers’ responses to Statement 10

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	38	36%
Agree	48	46%
Not sure	9	9%
Disagree	8	8%
Strongly disagree	1	1%
Total	104	100%

Graph 11 Teachers’ responses to Statement 10



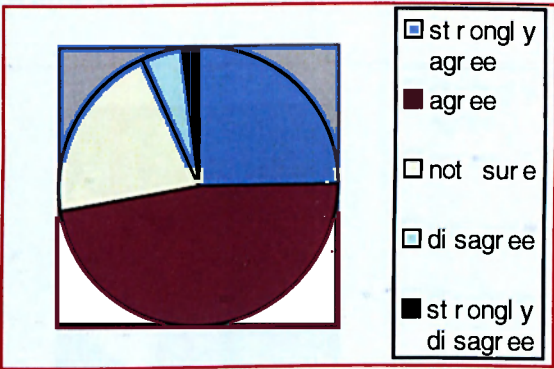
Statement 11: My school/district is a strong supporter of inclusive education.

This statement is similar to the previous one, trying to examine teachers' views whether the school/district is a supporting force for inclusion. Survey results in Table 12 show the majority of the respondents agree (46%) or strongly agree (36%) to the statement. This indicates that teachers feel the environment for implementing inclusion is highly supportive.

Table 12 Teachers' responses to Statement 11

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	26	36%
Agree	49	46%
Not sure	22	9%
Disagree	5	8%
Strongly disagree	2	1%
Total	104	100%

Graph 12 Teachers' responses to Statement 11



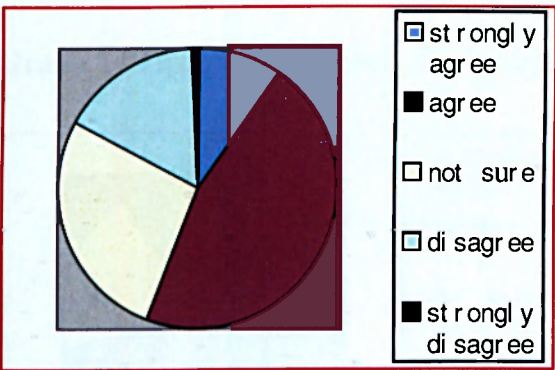
Statement 12: Regular teachers must spend a great deal of time with students with disabilities.

This statement deals with teachers’ belief on the necessity of spending a great deal of time with students with disabilities. Survey results (Table 13) show 56% of respondents agree or strongly agree to the statement while a considerable proportion of teachers (27%) can not decide if they agree or not, indicating that some teachers have reservation on the issue.

Table 13 Teachers’ responses to Statement 12

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	10	10%
Agree	48	46%
Not sure	28	27%
Disagree	17	16%
Strongly disagree	1	1%
Total	104	100%

Graph 13 Teachers’ responses to Statement 12



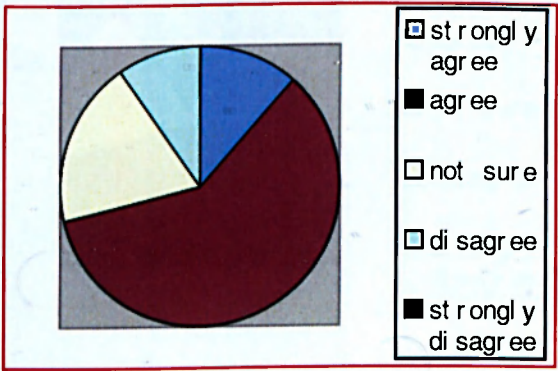
Statement 13: Efforts are made to encourage mutual planning and collaboration among personnel in my school/district.

Teachers’ attitude toward collaboration was a factor of interest in the study and this statement was used to find out how teachers felt about collaboration among staff in the school/district. Table 14 shows 71% of the teachers surveyed agree or strongly agree to the statement. Only 10% disapprove with the statement while 19% can not decide. The results indicate that teachers investigated quite identify with the efforts made to encourage collaboration among personnel, which is widely believed to be a condition for successful inclusion.

Table 14 Teachers’ responses to Statement 13

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	12	11%
Agree	62	60%
Not sure	20	19%
Disagree	10	10%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	104	100%

Graph 14 Teachers’ responses to Statement 13



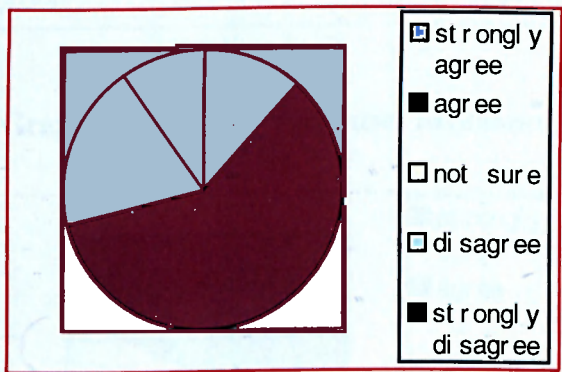
Statement 14: Students should be grouped in ways that allow a wide variety of abilities in each class.

This is a statement that describes the characteristics of an inclusive classroom and was included in the questionnaire to examine teachers’ beliefs on how inclusive classrooms should be organized. It was found that more than half of the respondents (62%) agree or strongly agree to the ‘inclusive’ statement, showing a supportive attitude toward inclusion. Meanwhile, a limited proportion of teachers (19%) either expressed opposition or uncertainty toward the statement.

Table 15 Teachers’ responses to Statement 14

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	13	13%
Agree	51	49%
Not sure	19	18%
Disagree	19	18%
Strongly disagree	2	2%
Total	104	100%

Graph 15 Teachers’ responses to Statement 14



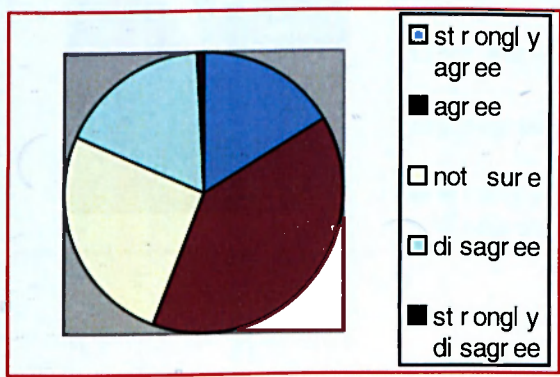
Statement 15: All students should be included in regular environments to the greatest extent possible.

This statement reflects the ideal and values of full inclusion and was used to test teachers' attitude toward inclusion. Those who subscribe to the principles of inclusion would find the statement easy to be accepted, but in practice, many people have doubts if this is realistic. Survey results (Table 16) show 56% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement. In contrast, 18% have opposite views. Meanwhile, 26% have reservations or uncertainty about the statement. The results indicate that teachers have varied attitude toward the ideals of inclusion. Slightly more than half of the teachers identify with these ideals, but a considerable proportion of teachers either have doubts or disagreement.

Table 16 Teachers' responses to Statement 15

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	17	16%
Agree	41	40%
Not sure	27	26%
Disagree	18	17%
Strongly disagree	1	1%
Total	104	100%

Graph 16 Teachers' responses to Statement 15



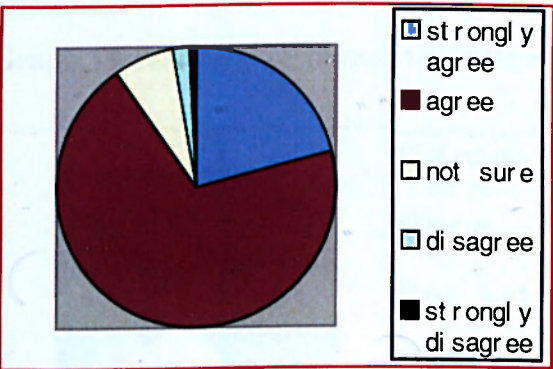
Statement 16: Slow learners should receive special help outside the regular classroom.

This statement was designed to identify teachers' attitude toward instructing students with learning difficulties in mainstream settings. Providing special help outside the regular classroom is an instruction strategy that may be effective but requires extra time and efforts from the teacher. Table 17 illustrates teachers' responses to the statement. The majority of the teachers investigated (90%) agree or strongly agree to the statement. Few teachers (3%) disagree or strongly disagree to the statement. The results show that most teachers support inclusion of students with learning difficulties in regular classroom.

Table 17 Teachers' responses to Statement 16

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	22	21%
Agree	72	69%
Not sure	7	7%
Disagree	2	2%
Strongly disagree	1	1%
Total	104	100%

Graph 17 Teachers' responses to Statement 16



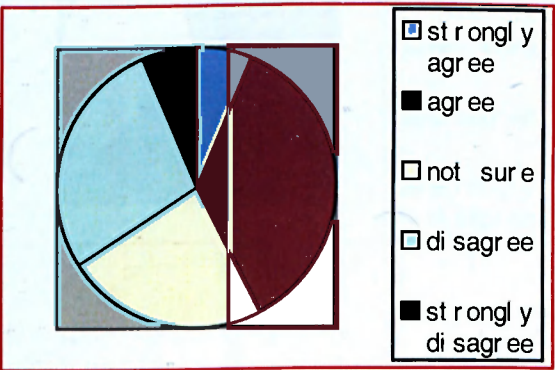
Statement 17: Opportunities for training are provided by my school/district that meet my needs for professional growth.

This statement was used to find out teachers’ views on training opportunities provided for them. It is generally believed that training is necessary for teachers’ professional development and can change teachers’ attitude toward inclusion. Survey results in Table 18 show less than half of the respondents (39%) agree or strongly agree that they are provided opportunities by their school/district to meet their needs for professional growth. 21% say they are not sure if this statement is true or not, showing a reserved attitude. Meanwhile, 30% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree to the statement. The results indicate that teachers are not satisfied with the opportunities provided for their professional development.

Table 18 Teachers’ responses to Statement 17

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	6	6%
Agree	34	33%
Not sure	22	21%
Disagree	26	25%
Strongly disagree	6	5%
Total	104	100%

Graph 18 Teachers’ responses to Statement 17



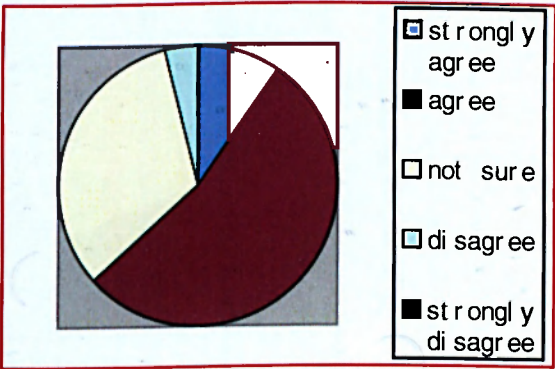
Statement 18: Inclusion in the regular classroom will not hurt the educational progress of the student with a disability.

This statement is one of the two negative ones used to examine teachers’ overall attitude toward inclusion, from the perspective of possible harm that might be done to the educational progress of the student with a disability. As table 19 shows, 64% of the respondents agree or strongly agree to the statement while only 4% disagree or strongly disagree. However, 33% of the respondents display cautious attitude and reservation, saying they are not sure if inclusion will not hurt the educational progress of the student with a disability.

Table 19 Teachers’ responses to Statement 18

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	10	10%
Agree	56	54%
Not sure	34	33%
Disagree	4	4%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	104	100%

Graph 19 Teachers’ responses to Statement 18



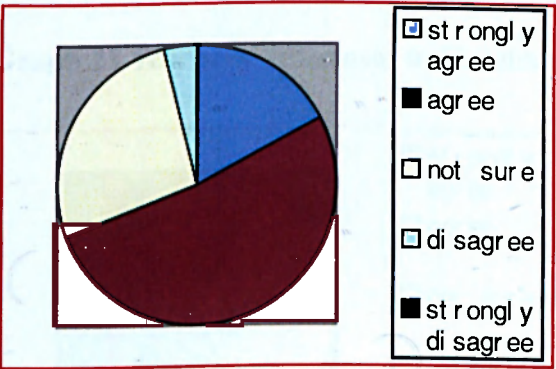
Statement 19: Placement of a student with a disability into a regular classroom is not disruptive to students without disabilities.

This statement was also used to identify teachers' overall attitude toward inclusion from the perspective of possible disruption to students without disabilities. Table 20 shows similar results to the previous statement. 69% of the respondents agree or strongly agree to the statement while only 4% disagree or strongly disagree. There are a considerable number of teachers (27%) saying they are not sure if inclusion of a student with a disability is not disruptive to students without disabilities, obviously showing reservation on the issue.

Table 20 Teachers' responses to Statement 19

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	18	17%
Agree	54	52%
Not sure	28	27%
Disagree	4	4%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	104	100%

Graph 20 Teachers' responses to Statement 19



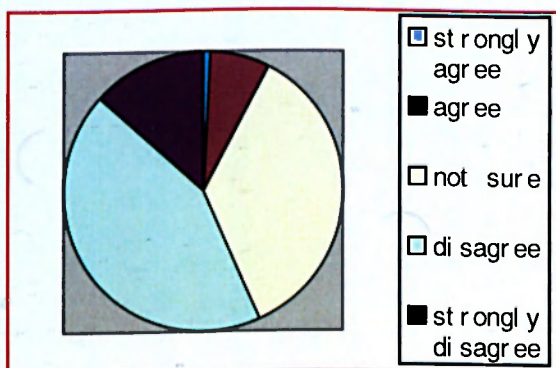
Statement 20: Regular school teachers have enough expertise to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

This statement was designed to examine teachers' confidence in regular school teachers' capability to meet the special needs of students with disabilities. It is believed that higher level of confidence should lead to more positive attitude. Table 21 shows only 8% of the respondents agree or strongly agree to the statement while more than half (56%) disagree or strongly disagree that regular school teachers have enough expertise to meet the needs of students with disabilities. A high proportion of teachers (36%) say they are not sure if regular teachers have enough expertise. The results indicate that teachers seem to have a low level of confidence in their capability to meet the special needs of students with disabilities.

Table 21 Teachers' responses to Statement 20

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	1%
Agree	7	7%
Not sure	37	36%
Disagree	45	43%
Strongly disagree	14	13%
Total	104	100%

Graph 21 Teachers' responses to Statement 20



4.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented results of the survey and briefly discussed findings based on data collected. In the first part of this chapter, I introduced the demographic information about teachers who completed the questionnaire. In the second part, I described and briefly analyzed the data collected from the questionnaires completed by 104 teachers. It was found that teacher attitude toward inclusion was a matter of complex nature with multi-dimensions. In other words, it is impossible to describe teachers' attitude toward inclusion from single or double perspectives. However, generally speaking, it can be said that Czech teachers hold positive attitude toward inclusion. For this argument, supporting evidence can be found from the survey results as illustrated in this chapter.

In the next chapter, I will evaluate these findings by comparing them with previous research results in literature.

Chapter V

Evaluation

In this chapter I will discuss and evaluate findings that have been obtained from analysis of the survey results presented in the last chapter. I will link and compare these findings with what we have already known about teacher attitude toward inclusion as discussed in literature review (see Chapter Two).

5.1 Czech teachers' overall attitude toward inclusion

Inclusion itself is a complex issue (see literature review in Chapter Two). Teacher's attitude toward inclusion shares a similar nature. Results of this study confirmed findings of a number of previous studies on teacher attitude toward inclusion. Analysis of data shows that Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion has multi-dimensions. On the one hand, the majority of teachers show approval to the general principles/ideas of inclusion, on the other hand they have obvious reservations or negative attitude to some practical aspects of inclusion.

In this study twenty pro-inclusion statements were used to examine teachers' attitude towards a range of factors related to inclusive education. Statements 9, 15, 18 and 19 were designed to test teachers' overall attitude toward inclusion. These statements reflect general concepts, ideas or ideals of inclusion, which have been broadly recognized. For example, statement 15 says 'All students should be included in regular environments to the greatest extent possible.' Obviously this is very much consistent with clause five of Salamanca Statement (1994, p. ix):

regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective

education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

5.2 Different types of disability

Survey results show more than half of the Czech teachers investigated (62%) agree or strongly agree with statement 14, which indicates that these teachers have supportive attitude toward the general concepts of inclusion.

Statement 9 'The inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms can be beneficial to the other students in the class' is in line with research findings that inclusion is generally a positive intervention for students with and without disabilities (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000; Bender and Vail, 1995). For this statement, 91% of the respondents expressed supportive attitude. For Statement 18 'Inclusion in the regular classroom will not hurt the educational progress of the student with a disability' and Statement 19 'Placement of a student with a disability into a regular classroom is not disruptive to students without disabilities', the approval rate of respondents is 64% and 69% respectively. Therefore, It can be concluded that Czech teachers' overall attitude toward inclusion is positive. This conclusion corresponds with findings of a number of researchers (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Bowman, 1986; Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1999; Clough and Lindsay, 1991; Avramidis et al, 2000).

However, one can argue that for statements concerning such a moral issue as inclusion, respondents will naturally tend to choose to be seen in good light rather than giving their true opinions. This is indeed one of the disadvantages of questionnaire based survey, but results show there is also a proportion (as high as 37%) of respondents expressing their disapproval or uncertainty to these statements, which indicates the responses were given after serious consideration. After all, inclusion as a goal for education in the Czech Republic has received considerable attention and publicity, for which teachers' attitude must also have been influenced positively (see 1.2 Inclusive education in the Czech Republic, Chapter One). Though there are still a limited

proportion of teachers not in favour of inclusion, the majority hold positive attitude.

5.2 Different types of disabilities

A review of literature has shown that teachers' attitude toward inclusion can be significantly influenced by different types of disabilities involved. Teachers are accepting of students with mild physical disabilities, but are reluctant to include students with severe physical disabilities, intellectual disability (Center and Ward, 1987). Teachers in the UK rank students with emotional and behavioral difficulties as the most difficult group to be included (Clough & Lindsay, 1991).

In this study, Statement 4, 5, 6 were designed to test teachers' attitude toward inclusion of students with different types of disabilities. It was found that as high as 85% of the respondents support inclusion of students with mild physical disabilities, while less than half (43%) agreed or strongly agreed that students with emotional, behavioral problems could be included in regular classrooms. Similar results were obtained about inclusion of students with intellectual disability (45%). Meanwhile, a surprisingly high proportion of teachers (36% and 31% respectively) showed uncertain attitude toward inclusion of students with emotional, behavioral problems and intellectual disability. These findings were quite consistent with those of previous studies, indicating little difference in attitude between teachers from Czech Republic and other countries.

The reasons why teachers have varied attitudes toward different types of disabilities, according to Bowman (1986), were that students with mild physical disabilities were considered the easiest to manage in the classrooms. Ward *et al.* (1994) suggested that students with disabling conditions which posed additional problems and demanded extra teaching competencies from teachers caused uncertainty and reservations in teachers' attitude toward inclusion. It seems Czech teachers also have concerns over these issues and hold similar attitude as found in other countries.

5.3 Teachers' perception of disability

Teachers' perception of disability has been identified by previous studies as a significant factor in the formation of teachers' attitude toward inclusion (Campbell et al. 2003; Carrington, 1999; Jordan, Lindsay & Stanovich, 1997).

In this study, statement 1 'Disability is a social issue instead of a personal problem' was used to examine respondents' perception of disability. Campbell et al. (2003) argued that negative attitude toward disability leads to low expectations of a person with a disability and it could lead to reduced learning opportunities for the person in return. It is logical to assume that teachers with negative attitude toward disability tend to hold negative attitude toward inclusion and vice versa. However, it was not intended to use this statement to determine Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion, though it can be an indication of attitude.

Results show 51% of the teachers agree or strongly agree with this statement, indicating that more than half of the teachers tend to view disability in a model different from the traditional medical model which view disability as a problem inherent in the individual. 33% of the respondents were uncertain about the statement. Carrington's (1999) finding that a number of teachers view disability in the medical model is not confirmed in this study. More than half of the Czech teachers seem to perceive disability in a functional or environmental model which views disability as a result of the interaction between the student and the environment. Obviously such beliefs foster the formation of a positive attitude toward inclusion. A high proportion of teachers reported they were not sure about the issue, indicating they had reservations or simply did not want to reveal their views.

5.4 Instructional strategies

Several statements in the questionnaire were designed to examine teachers' beliefs in instruction strategies of inclusive education. These instruction strategies included grouping of students, making modifications for students with disabilities, providing

extra help for students with special needs, lowering class size, etc.

It is found teachers investigated almost unanimously (99%) agree or strongly agree that it is important to make modifications for students with special needs at regular schools. Tanner et al (1996) reported similar findings in their teacher attitude study where teachers ranked the need to make modifications as the most important. Demographic data of the present study indicate that 96.1% of the teachers have special education teaching experience, which may have contributed to the almost unanimous responses. After all, making modifications for students with disabilities is a key condition for successful inclusion.

Statement 7 'Keeping academic standards consistent for all students is important' was used in the study to identify teachers' beliefs about the strategy of keeping consistent academic standards for all students. As mentioned earlier, low standards or expectations from the teacher toward students with disabilities lead to less learning opportunities and it will start a cycle of impaired performance and further lowered expectations, both by the teacher and the child (Campbell et al. 2003). However, it was found in this study that a surprisingly low proportion of teachers (12%) agree or strongly agree teachers should keep academic standards consistent for all students. In contrast, 76% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

The surprising results were perhaps due to misunderstandings of the teachers with the statement. When the author discussed with a head teacher about the survey after teachers had already completed the questionnaires, the teacher described Statement 7 as 'confusing', which was not found during the process of constructing the questionnaire. There are probably two reasons for the problem with the statement. First, the statement itself is to some extent an idealistic assumption which some teachers might not identify with. The words 'keeping academic standards consistent for all students' sounds overassertive. The second reason is probably with the translation. For a statement that involves controversial concepts such as this, any

slight alteration or loss of meanings due to translation may cause very different responses from participants.

Regarding class size, survey results show 95% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that maximum class size should be lowered when including students with disabilities. This finding is supported by Siedentop & Tannehill's (2000) study which suggests Class sizes larger than 30 when working with students with or without disabilities contributes to teacher impatience, intensify discipline problems, and is a barrier to individualizing instruction. Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996) also reported that teachers felt class size should be lowered to less than twenty when children with disabilities were included. At the schools the author has visited in Prague during this study, class size is normally around 30, which is perhaps one of the reasons why many Czech teachers believe class size should be lowered when including students with disabilities.

Other questions investigated in this study include teachers' attitude toward time that should be spent with students with disabilities and whether extra help should be provided to slow learners. It was found 56% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that regular teachers must spend a great deal of time with students with disabilities. A few teachers (17%) disagreed with this point while more teachers (27%) demonstrated uncertain attitudes. Similar results were obtained for the second question. 56% agreed or strongly agreed slow learners should receive special help outside the regular classroom while 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

In fact these two questions are both closely related to the practice of individualized education plan (IEP). In the Czech Republic there is a system that ensures an individualized education plan is prepared for each student with special education needs by specialists in cooperation with parents and school teachers. Menlove et al (2001) reported when regular education teachers meaningfully contribute to the Individualized education plan process, they are generally satisfied with the process.

Results of this study show Czech teachers tend to support IEP of students with disabilities.

5.5 Collaboration among personnel

Survey results show the majority of the respondents (71%) agree or strongly agree that efforts are made to encourage mutual planning and collaboration among personnel in their school/district. This result indicates that teachers are quite optimistic with collaboration among staff in the school/district.

Villa & Thousand (1992) contended the collaborative team approach has emerged as a model of addressing the curricular needs of children with and without disabilities in regular classrooms. It seems teachers identify with the effectiveness of collaborative strategy in meeting the needs of students with and without abilities. The study by Tanner et al (1996) found experienced teachers most strongly agreed on importance of collaboration, consultation, and mutual planning time. The present study on Czech teachers' attitude confirmed this point.

5.6 Support provided for teachers

Statement 10 'I have support from the authorities to try new ideas and implement creative strategies' and statement 11 'My school/district is a strong supporter of inclusive education' were designed to find out teachers' attitude toward support provided for them. It was found 82% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they have support from the authorities to make innovations while only less than 10% disagree. Accordingly, 82% of teachers agree or strongly agree that the school/district is a strong supporter of inclusive education.

Such results are not surprising given the fact that inclusion has become part of the educational policy in the Czech Republic. Janney *et al.* (1995) compared teacher attitudes before and after teachers received adequate support from relevant authorities and found that such support was instrumental in the formation of positive attitude

toward integration of students with disabilities. Rachel, Shunit and Neomi (2005) suggested the less social support teachers experience, the higher was their level of negative attitude towards inclusion. Czech teachers seem to have support from the authorities, which helps the formation of positive attitude toward inclusion.

5.7 Teachers' confidence

Teachers' attitude toward regular school teachers' capability to meet the needs of students with disabilities was investigated in this study. It was found only 8% of the respondents agree or strongly agree regular school teachers have enough expertise. The results show a quite low level of confidence in regular school teachers' capability. Similarly, Avramidis et al (2000) reported teachers in south-west England demonstrated a lack of confidence in meeting the requirement of students with special education needs. Their study also revealed that teachers with substantial training demonstrated more confidence than those without training.

It seems that teachers generally have low level of confidence in their capability in implementing inclusive education. This low level of confidence may be attributed to the lack of training as identified by Avramidis et al (2000), or lack of experience. Sebastian and Mathot-Buckner's (1998) study reported that teachers' attitude became more positive at the end of the school year than in the beginning, after the teachers have gained experience and developed skills needed to implement inclusive programs. There seems to be a chain effect in which training or experience helps teachers to develop skills and capability which in return increases teachers' confidence and consequently, results in positive changes in teachers' attitude toward inclusion.

5.8 Training

Training has been identified by a number of studies as an influential factor for teachers' attitude toward inclusion (Center & Ward, 1987; Avramidis et al, 2000; Tanner et al, 1996). In this study, however, it was found less than half (39%) of the teachers investigated felt they were provided opportunities for training by the

school/district to meet their needs of professional growth. It seems that Czech teachers were not satisfied with the training opportunities provided for them. 30% disagree or strongly disagree training opportunities are provided for them. This finding can be explained by the fact that in the Czech Republic, funding for special education needs is not enough (see Chapter One 1.2 Inclusive Education in the Czech Republic). Though teachers have access to in-service training programs and seminars organized for mainstream school teachers (EUMAP, 2003), they do not seem to be satisfied with these provisions.

Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are closely related to their capability to meet the special education needs of students with disabilities (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995; Center & Ward, 1987). Undoubtedly, training is one of the most effective ways to improve such capabilities. Though evidences have been reported concerning the positive correlation between training and teacher attitude toward inclusion (Sebastian & Mathot-Buckner, 1998; Campbell et al, 2003), this study does not intend to confirm the correlation relationship. Data in this study reveal that there exists a gap between teachers' expectation in training opportunities and actual provision in the Czech Republic, and this gap might have influenced teachers' attitude toward inclusion. Avramidis *et al* (2000) reported that half of the teachers in their study felt there was the need for systematic, intensive training. The present study confirms that Czech teachers have similar needs.

5.9 Conclusion

In this study, twenty statements were used to examine teachers' attitude toward inclusion and a range of issues concerning inclusion. Corresponding data were collected and analyzed. It was found Czech teachers were generally supportive to the concepts of inclusion, though they have reservations or negative attitude toward a few aspects of inclusion, especially in practical fields.

Specifically, major findings of this study on Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion

are presented as follows:

1. Most teachers (85%) are supportive to inclusion of students with mild physical disabilities, but they have reservations or negative attitude toward inclusion of students with emotional/behavioral problems (57%) and intellectual disability (52%).
2. Most teachers (99%) recognize the need to make modifications for students with special needs at regular schools.
3. 95% of the teachers believe class size must be lowered when including students with disabilities.
4. 71% of the teachers believe efforts are made to encourage mutual planning and collaboration among personnel in the school /district.
5. 82% of the teachers believe they have support from the school/district for inclusion.
6. Teachers demonstrated lack of confidence in regular teachers' capability to meet the special needs of students with disabilities.
7. Less than half (39%) of the teachers feel they are provided training opportunities by the school/district to meet their needs of professional growth.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

6.1 Review of the process of the study

This study is conducted as part of the fulfillment of MA Erasmus Mundus Special Education Needs program, which started in September 2005. Since then I have been studying as a master student in Britain, Netherlands and Czech Republic. I have had opportunities to visit schools in the three countries, which gave me first hand experiences of the development of inclusive education in these countries. From these experiences I found school teachers have different opinions toward inclusion. A number of teachers do not believe inclusion is a realistic goal.

I realize it is an interesting and meaningful topic to investigate teachers' attitude toward inclusion. Therefore, when I came to the Czech Republic for the final stage of my MA education, I decided to conduct a study on Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion. My objective is to find out what attitude Czech teachers' hold toward the practice of including students with special education needs in regular classrooms. I especially expect to examine Czech teachers' attitudes toward a range of practical issues concerning implementation of inclusion such as their attitudes toward training, instructional strategies for students with disabilities, support provided for teachers, etc. Based on the findings, I hope implications for future practice can be revealed and recommendations can be made to improve policy making and teacher training.

I searched relevant literature of previous studies concerning teacher attitude toward inclusion. Based on literature review, I developed a questionnaire that was later used in the survey of Czech teachers' attitude. To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire was reviewed by two specialists in the field and then translated into

Czech. To obtain permission of carrying out the survey, e-mails were sent to directors of many schools in Prague. Only a few schools replied and expressed willingness to cooperate. In the end, the questionnaire-based survey was conducted at two regular schools and two special schools. In addition, a number of randomly selected teachers who had interest in completing the questionnaire were also included in the survey. Finally, 200 questionnaires were distributed and 104 successfully completed questionnaires were returned with a valid response rate of 52%.

Results of the survey show Czech teachers are generally supportive to the concepts of inclusion but have reservations or negative attitude toward some practical aspects of inclusion, which is consistent with the findings of other researchers. For instance, results show most Czech teachers support the inclusion of students with mild physical disabilities, but less than half of the teachers are supportive to the inclusion of students with emotional/behavioral problems and intellectual disability. Results also show Czech teachers are not satisfied with the training opportunities provided for them and demonstrated a low level of confidence in regular teachers' capability in meeting the special needs of students with disabilities, though they feel they have support from school authorities and are optimistic about collaboration among personnel in the school.

On the whole, the study has achieved its preset objectives. Data collection is especially successful in terms of the amount of data collected and response rate, given the time constraint of the task. Research questions have been answered with evidence provided by the data collected. Validity and reliability of the results are secured to a large extend.

However, the findings of this study seem to be facts about teacher attitude toward inclusion with evidence of frequency and percentage and therefore, tend to be descriptive and lack depth to some extend. Further more, findings of this study does not reveal the correlative relationship between factors such as training or support

provided and teachers' attitude toward inclusion, which has been confirmed in many previous studies. For instance, survey results indicate 31% of the teachers are not sure if students with intellectual disability can be included in regular classrooms, but no information is given by the data about what are the concerns of these teachers regarding inclusion of students with intellectual disability. Moreover, no information is provided on how intellectual disability as a factor has influenced teachers' attitude toward inclusion. It is realized this is due to restraints of the research methods used in the study.

6.2 Evaluation of the research methods

A qualitative research strategy combining quantitative methods has been adopted in the study with the objective of collecting descriptive data to identify facts about Czech teachers' attitude toward inclusion.

Originally, a Likert type scale was designed as the instrument to examine teacher attitude, as in a number of previous studies on teacher attitude. However, the difficulty and complexity of using tools of statistical analysis were underestimated. Efforts were made to use these tools to analyze data collected, but problems derived continuously due to lack of experience and technical aid. In that case, validity and reliability can hardly be guaranteed. Finally, the Likert type scale and its corresponding statistical analysis were given up considering all the difficulties and time constraint. Needless to say, the explanatory power of sophisticated statistical analysis is strong, but when reliability and validity become a problem, methods do not seem to have any significance. Therefore, a teacher attitude questionnaire was developed as the instrument to examine teacher attitude toward inclusion.

The advantage of using survey as the method was obvious in the study. As suggested by Robson (2002), it is simple and straightforward for the purpose of attitude study. The success of data collection in this study could largely be attributed to the use of questionnaire-based survey.

However, the disadvantage of the survey is also quite evident. First, in this study data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage to measure the simple distribution of responses. Such analysis gives clear and reliable information, but the results tend to be simple and limited in explanatory power. This point has already been discussed in the first part of this chapter. Second, by using questionnaire-based survey to examine teacher's attitude, the context in which their attitudes occur can not be measured and taken into consideration. As commented by Robson (2002), quantitative methods can not capture the subtleties and complexities of human behavior. Avramidis & Norwich (2002) point out that in surveys, respondents may have different interpretations for the same term, leading to unpredictable responses. Third, there is the possibility the respondents do not give their true opinions, beliefs when completing a questionnaire for various reasons. Avramidis & Norwich (2002) recommend combined methods that include questionnaires, interviews and observation should be used in teacher attitude study. However, due to time constraint and language barriers, interview and observation are not used in this study. Finally, due to the fact that the questionnaire must be translated into Czech, it is almost unavoidable that missed information or misunderstanding between the researcher and participants has happened

6.3 Limitations of the study

There are several important limitations in this study. First of all, this study was conducted in Prague with participants mainly from four schools in the city. Findings of the study may be limited only to teachers from school in the city of Prague. Secondly, it can be seen from the demographic data that 96% of the respondents have special education teaching experience. Though this was completely a coincidence and it might also be possible that most Czech teachers have opportunities to teach students with special needs, the author still doubt such high proportion of teachers with special education teaching experience is common among Czech teachers. Therefore, there might be limitation in generalizability of the findings. Thirdly, there is limitation in the analysis of data. Analysis should be extended to identifying the correlation among

various factors that influence teachers' attitude toward inclusion. Due to concerns with validity and reliability, such efforts were finally given up in this study.

6.4 Recommendation for future practice

- It was found in the study that Czech teachers demonstrated low level of confidence in general teachers' capability in meeting the special education needs of students with disabilities. In addition, less than half of the teachers feel they are provided training opportunities for professional development. In recognition of this, efforts should be made to provide systematic and comprehensive training for all teachers to improve their skills and capabilities in meeting the special education needs of students with disabilities. Such training should also be provided for preservice student teachers. It is believed with provision of more training opportunities at both preservice and inservice level, teachers' attitude toward inclusion can be more favorable.
- More support should be provided for teachers in the practice of inclusive education. Support should include specialist assistance in addressing special needs of students with emotional/ behavioral problems and intellectual disability.
- Measures should be taken to allow teachers to have more time for preparing and implementing individualized education plan. One effective method is to lower the maximum class size.
- Decision makers should pay more attention to teachers' concerns, opinions when making decisions of inclusive education. Teachers should be enquired before any decision of inclusion is put in practice.

6.5 Implications for future research

A great deal of research has already been conducted on teacher attitude toward inclusion, but there are still quite a few factors that need to be examined. Findings of

this study provide some implications for future research.

If we know teachers have reservations or negative attitude toward inclusion of students with emotional/behavioral problems and intellectual disability, it would be necessary and meaningful to examine what specific factors have caused such attitudes and find what can be done to form more favorable teacher attitude.

Since teachers are not satisfied with the training opportunities provided for their professional growth, studies should be done on what kind of training is most needed by teachers and what skills teachers think are important in implementing inclusive education.

As we understand contact experience can influence teachers' attitude toward inclusion, it is important to explore teachers' feelings, experiences in inclusive classrooms addressing the special needs of students with disabilities. Moreover, if teachers' attitude changes as their experience of inclusion increases and schools become more inclusive, studies on this process and development of teachers' attitude should be of special value.

Furthermore, there are implications in methodology that can be used in teacher attitude studies. Though many researchers have used quantitative methods such as survey in teacher attitude studies, the disadvantages of such methods have become evident. In future studies, qualitative research design or mixed research design should have more advantages in teacher attitude studies. Combined methods such as questionnaire, in-depth interview, observation, case study will help researchers to collect more valuable data and acquire deeper understanding of teachers' attitudes and the context from which such attitudes have developed.

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Appendix A Questionnaire

Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusion

Demographics

Please circle or fill in responses

1. Male _____ Female _____
2. Number of years teaching _____
3. Do you have experience teaching a child with special needs?
A. Yes B. No
4. I am currently teaching at a _____.
A. mainstream school B. special school

This survey concerns 'inclusive education' as one method of meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the regular school environment. Inclusive education means that all students with disabilities are mainstreamed and become the responsibility of the regular class teacher who is supported by specialists.

For each statement below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by circling the appropriate number.

Strongly agree =5

Agree =4

Not sure =3

Disagree =2

Strongly disagree =1

1. Disability is a social issue instead of a personal problem.	5	4	3	2	1
2. It is important to make modifications for students with special needs at regular schools.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Teachers' opinions are taken into consideration in making decisions of inclusion.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Inclusion of students with mild physical disabilities into regular classes is generally effective.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Students with emotional / behavioral disorders can be included in regular classrooms.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Students with intellectual disability can be included in regular classrooms.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Keeping academic standards consistent for all students is important.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Maximum class size should be lowered when including students with disabilities.	5	4	3	2	1
9. The inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms can be beneficial to the other students in the class.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I have support from the authorities to try new ideas and implement creative strategies.	5	4	3	2	1
11. My school/district is a strong supporter of inclusive education.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Regular teachers must spend a great deal of time with	5	4	3	2	1

students with disabilities.					
13. Efforts are made to encourage mutual planning and collaboration among personnel in my school/district.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Students should be grouped in ways that allow a wide variety of abilities in each class.	5	4	3	2	1
15. All students should be included in regular environments to the greatest extent possible.	5	4	3	2	1
16. Slow learners should receive special help outside the regular classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
17. Opportunities for training are provided by my school /district that meet my needs for professional growth.	5	4	3	2	1
18. Inclusion in the regular classroom will not hurt the educational progress of the student with a disability.	5	4	3	2	1
19. Placement of a student with a disability into a regular classroom is not disruptive to students without disabilities.	5	4	3	2	1
20. Regular school teachers have enough expertise to meet the needs of students with disabilities.	5	4	3	2	1

(Over)

Thank you for your time and participation!

Appendix B Questionnaire in Czech

Postoje učitelů k inkluzi

Prosím zaškrtněte nebo vyplňte:

1. Jsem * muž * žena
2. Počet odučených let
3. Máte zkušenosti se speciálně pedagogickou výukou? *ano *ne
4. V současné době působíte ve škole: * běžné * speciální

Toto šetření se týká *inkluzivního vzdělávání* jako jedné z metod naplňování potřeb dětí s postižením v běžném školním prostředí. Inkluzivní vzdělávání chápeme tak, že žáci s postižením jsou zařazeni do běžných škol a odpovědnost za ně přejímá třídní učitel s podporou dalších odborníků.

**U každého následujícího tvrzení vyjádřete svůj souhlas nebo nesouhlas
zakroužkováním příslušné číslice, přičemž**

- 5 = souhlasím bezvýhradně**
4 = souhlasím
3 = nevím, nejsem si jistý/á
2 = nesouhlasím
1 = rozhodně nesouhlasím

1.	Postižení je spíše sociální problém než problém osobnosti	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Pro výuku žáků v běžných školách je třeba vytvořit podmínky	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Názory učitelů jsou brány v úvahu při rozhodování o inkluzi – zařazení žáka do běžné školy	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Inkluze žáků s lehkým tělesným postižením je efektivní	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Žáci s emocionálními problémy a s problémy v chování mohou být zařazeni do běžných škol	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Žáci s mentálním postižením mohou být zařazeni do běžných tříd	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Je důležité udržovat si u každého žáka stejná očekávání ohledně výuky	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Maximální počet žáků ve třídě by měl být snížen, jsou-li tam zařazeni žáci s postižením	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Inkluze žáka s postižením do běžných tříd může přinést prospěch ostatním žákům	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Mám dostatečnou podporu od svých nadřízených při realizaci nových myšlenek a rozvoji učitelské tvořivosti ve výuce	5	4	3	2	1

11.	Moje škola a místní komunita školní inkluzi velice podporují	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Učitel běžné školy musí trávit mnoho času s integrovanými žáky s postižením	5	4	3	2	
13.	Škola povzbuzuje učitele ke vzájemné spolupráci a plánování	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Každá třída by měla zahrnovat žáky s různými úrovněmi schopností	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Žáci se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami by měli být zařazováni do běžného školního prostředí v největší možné míře	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Zaostávajícím žákům by měla být poskytována náležitá podpora též mimo vyučování ve třídě	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Vedení školy a nadřízený školský úřad poskytují dostatek příležitostí k odbornému růstu učitelů v oblasti školní inkluze	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Inkluze v běžné třídě nepoškozuje proces výuky u žáka s postižením	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Zařazení žáka s postižením do běžné třídy není destruktivním činitelem pro ostatní žáky	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Učitelé běžných tříd mají dostatek odborných znalostí, aby mohli naplňovat speciální vzdělávací potřeby žáků s postižením	5	4	3	2	1

**Mnohokrát děkuji za váš čas,
který jste vyplnění dotazníku věnoval/a**

personal statement ?

S.8

literature overview of
Right to choose ?

limitations ok

Why these statements

aware of shortcomings

as results of the statements were
unimpaired

Why selected statements
well structured and written

view

practicable
research

Appendix C Cover Letter

Dear teachers,

Luo Hui, a graduate student in Special Education Needs from Charles University in Prague, is investigating teacher attitude towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular education classrooms. This project is part of an international programme called Erasmus Mundus sponsored by European Commission.

The purpose of this study is to describe teacher attitude towards inclusion and to find out what factors can influence teachers' attitude toward inclusion. Recommendations will be made based on the findings of the study to improve educational policy making and teacher training programmes.

All responses will be completely anonymous, please do not write your name on the questionnaire.

If you have any questions to ask Luo Hui, please don't hesitate to call 739737534 or send an e-mail to luoziz@hotmail.com.

Thank you

Luo Hui

(420) 739737534

luoziz@hotmail.com

Introduction Letter from Charles University



UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE

PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

oddělení pro zahraniční a vnější vztahy

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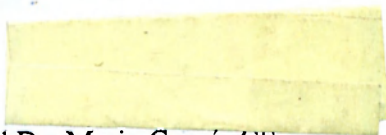
V Praze dne 25.5.2006

Vážená paní ředitelko,
Vážený pane řediteli,

dovoluji si Vás požádat o přijetí našeho studenta pana Luo Hui z Číny ve vaší škole či zařízení. Pan Luo Hui je zapsán do mezinárodního programu Erasmus/Mundus, který je hrazen z prostředků Evropské Unie a probíhá společně na třech univerzitách – Roehampton University London, Anglie, Fontys University Tilburg, Holandsko a na pražské Univerzitě Karlově. Pedagogická fakulta je přijímající organizací. Studijní program je zaměřen na oblast speciální pedagogiky – týká se vzdělávání jedinců se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami a jejich integrace.

Jmenovaný připravuje závěrečnou práci, kterou bude koncem srpna t.r. na naší fakultě obhajovat. Návštěva vaší školy/vašeho zařízení, rozhovor s Vámi, příp. s vašimi učiteli, žáky či studenty je součástí sběru dat, které by byly v práci použity a zpracovány podle stejných pravidel, jimiž se řídí i čeští studenti.

Budete-li požadovat podrobnější informace, ráda Vám je poskytnu. Předem děkuji za Vaši vstřícnost a spolupráci.



Doc. PhDr. Marie Cerná, CSc.
proděkanka pro zahraniční a vnější vztahy

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